The BEAVER AND OTHER ODDS AND ENDS

At the Somme in patient pain
Gnawed the German trunk in twain.

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THE BEAVER

Here is scant echo of the notes
That linger in the scholars' ears;
Mine is the chant that strains the throats
Of fighting Pioneers.

Bred in the open field and flood,
From classic scenes flung far apart;
These born of nature's primal mood,
Are nude and void of art.

Yet as they are or are not, I
Scorn charity from aught that lives;
My wild muse of a wilder sky,
She knows and she forgives.

Still I could wish their mental sword
Were sheathed by scholiasts, whose worth
Might classic amnesty accord,
The outlaw of the north.

THE BEAVER

AND

Other Odds and Ends

BY

A. C. STEWART

Author of

"The Pensioner," "Dust and Ashes,"

"The Shell," Etc., Etc.

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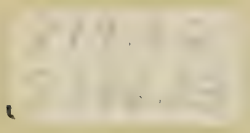

JAN 5 1967

Preface

To the readers of my last volume, "The Shell," I take this, the earliest opportunity, of offering my thanks. I shall render them, in a more extended form, in a new edition of that book which is now on the press.

To the appreciative reviewers of that unpretentious volume, I return sincere and cordial acknowledgements.

To the non-appreciative, I proffer, without rancour, my felicitations upon the altitude of their ideals. May they be realized to the full.

To one master of Literature I stand warmly indebted for his accuracy, skill and criticism, and having his "O.K." for some "Idyllic" lines in "The Shell," I shall require no excuse for some similar verses, ordinarily considered "suspect," that appear in this present work. I trust, also, that the dedication, precedent hereto, will not leave him in doubt as to "my viewpoint."

To our imported critics, dizzied with the dope from the Watts-Dunton-Etc.—Chalice, who dreamily yawned that my conclusions "On the Commercial Exploitation of the Poems of Allan Seegar and Rupert Brooke," were "far-fetched," I say, "Look again, Dearests, through the perspective of another year of War, and like Mirza, tell us what you see."

Of the contents of this present book it is unnecessary, the World being so very busy, to speak at serious length. "Efficiency," so loudly lauded by industrial insanity, splashing hip-deep in the European shambles, may hur-

riedly, over her dripping shoulder, charge me with the idleness of emphasizing infamy and with the futility of indignation against cynical hypocrisy, so calmly boastful of "its qualmless conscience and atrophied soul." But to "Efficiency"—if she could hear amidst the thunder of her multitudinous guns—I might intimate a workman's belief that the toilers' unrest and dissatisfaction is due to the fact that the Cynical Plunderers, coining the blood of the heroic, are still unhung.

Art, on the other hand, may object to the mixing of the sordid and savage with verse that is, or at least aims to be, liberal and humane. I could refer Art to many notable structures in many Literatures, but modesty, of which I have some, and Truth, of which I am a ragged servitor, makes me rather plead my inheritance of ill-assorted tools. With my materials and equipment, I have done, almost, what I could.

Those who are pleased with any part of this volume may, in a purely abstract manner, thank the divinity of Things-as-they-are. Those who are not pleased, may find it no waste of mentality to ponder for a few moments upon that other God-like Deity, Things-as-they-might-be.

In conclusion, if "Practical common sense," comfortable, rotund, and superior, accuses me of Utopian tendencies, I feel absolutely free to declare—if to believe in a world stripped bare of Privilege, Imposture and Fraud, of Idleness, Luxury and Vice, makes me answerable to their charge—that I, though not young, do with the perishing youth of all the warring nations, acknowledge myself—GUILTY.

Dedication

To the Great World-dominating Trinity—Commerce, Profit and War—One and Indivisible, I Dedicate This Book.

By inscribing this volume to Commerce, I am the first author among the world's many millions whom Nature has gifted with the necessary skill and courage to dedicate the fruits of his genius to this colossal Deity.

In the great Empires of antiquity, which flourished, fattened and fell, no poet had the intrepidity, inspiration and art to make himself—by a single stroke—immortal.

Authors have inscribed their books to princes, to patrons, to politicians, to pork packers, but never before to this triumphant Trinity. The "divinity that hedges" gods as well as kings has hitherto withheld them from this audacious task. The magnificence, grandeur and power of Commerce are so stupendously greater than God's, that writers have sunk upon their knees in mute worship, acquiescent, servile and abased—their silence eloquent testimony to the all-embracing power and dominion of this omniscient, omnipotent and miraculous god.

Devotion so complete and immediate is not a source of wonder when the astonished mind reflects, O Commerce, upon the power you wield and the authority you possess.

You control the crystalline springs of young and liberal thought, placing them in the charge of safe and dependable presidents and professors per anæsthetic endowments and financially upholstered chairs, "moulding" the human mind (as if it were a brick) and not a stream that, bursting from the mountains of ignorance, dashes through the canyons of Creeds, over the wreckage of War, and sweeps ever endlessly onward toward the great sea of untramelled mentality and human brotherhood.

As you withhold or extend your protection and assistance, Religion rustles in silken garments to the waves of harmonious music beneath sculptured arches, or in faded serge tinkles its tambourine on the dusty pavement with a garbage can for pulpit and beggary—instead of blackmail—as its means of subsistence.

Wonderful indeed, O Commerce, are your powers!

You can found vast cities amid the miasma of unsewered swamps, crowd them with round-shouldered, pale-faced populations, jam them into constricted suites, tenemental fire-traps, cobwebbed garrets, unplastered attics and musty basements, and, from the proceeds of this system, pose as a munificent philanthropist, by

building sanatoria and hospitals for congenital cripples, idiots, syphilitics and consumptives, exhibiting at the same time your chivalry and statesmanship by taxing the over-worked, diseased and debauched to erect indigent homes, prisons, penitentiaries and mad-houses for themselves. Glory to you, great Commerce! Truly your powers are almost beyond computation and belief.

You can leave the bug on the potato and the mustard in the wheat, and shave the city lawn smoother than a bridegroom, and, by overloading the rural worker, make the soil—sole source of human sustenance—hateful, degraded and abhorred, and in the process convince the city fool that the withered vegetable off a dusty stall is sweeter than one pulled freshly from the bosom of preserving earth, showing him also that only the profits accruing to the drover, the packer and the stockholder make pork, and beef and cereals palatable.

You, with your miraculous agency, can buy a pound of pork from the producer at 18 cents, build a railway to transport it hundreds of miles, establish huge factories to kill it, cure it, postcure it; then you can re-transport it, pass it through the hands of a middleman, and sell it to the man who grew it at 60 cents per lb. Yet you have convinced the grower who sold to you at 18 cents and re-purchased at 60 cents, that a world without "profit" is impossible, and that he who thinks otherwise is a fool.

You have convinced humanity that their measure of prosperity is greater when wheat at $2 per bushel pays you 8% for the loan upon it than it is when wheat at 50 cents per bushel pays you only 6%, in other words, that the 13% you absorb at the higher price makes the agriculturist rich. Wonderful, indeed!

You, O Commerce, have mankind worshipping at the shrine of financial paradox. You can prove to the laborer that he never had so much money, that 20 years ago he worked for $1.00 a day, and that now he gets $3.50. But you do not tell him that, while you multiplied his wages by three and a half, you multiplied the price of bacon by eleven, that a day's wages used to buy 20 lbs. of pork, now it buys less than six, notwithstanding this "*the striker*" still believes in *high wages* and "*Profit.*"

Behold you at your most astonishing perfection, Commerce! An idler who never soiled an undershirt with honest sweat, armed with your ingeniously printed slip—your promise to pay—(though you never paid, cannot pay and never will pay) whether he found it, filched it, inherited it or stole it, can demand and obtain food, shelter, service and amusement, though the workers who furnish these may toil, strained to the limit, under-nurtured, under-clad, and viciously housed, yet fully, faithfully and *undeniably believers in, and disciples of, "Profit."*

Glory to you, Commerce, who have reserved for us the tremendous spectacle of your logical and indubitable climax, War! War, "ideal," "chivalrous," "biological," "patriotic," "inevitable" and "*profitable*"! It is but reasonable that the wealthiest subject of

that Empire that "*was hatched from a cannon-ball*" and whose "*national industry is War*," should be the manufacturer of death-dealing engines, but even in the peaceful democracies, the Krupp co-devisors of destruction are not, so long as paper is negotiable, in danger of want. To your skill and power what greater tribute can be rendered—you who can invert the sacred writ, making it read, "In the midst of *Death* we are in *Life*"?

Incomparable Commerce! Millions are huddled, blanketed or unblanketed, shoeless often—if the shoes were good—into jostling graves, tens of millions pass beneath the pruners' knives and are swept along like wheat on a conveyor belt, to the "*Profit*"-*making* artificial limbs factory, whence, creaking with *dividend-paying leather and steel*, they hobble off towards the grave, an eyesore, problem and incubus to Commerce, Profit and War, who made them. Tens of thousands pass forever from the army, from society, from their friends into mental darkness, to wait with the soul already extinguished, for that hour when life also shall go out. Nevertheless you, O Commerce, have the world trembling, not for the bereaved, not for the dead, the maimed or the mad, but lest you might suffer "after the war."

Yet, O Commerce, despite your anxious and uncertain future, still faithful to those who worship thee, even to the third and fourth generation, you can and do maintain talent in the trench and stupidity on the staff. You can and do instruct fiction how it shall lie, how it shall minimize, eliminate or exaggerate. At your command the Press can demonstrate that a retreat of forty miles is absolutely inconsequential, and that an advance of 200 yards is an overwhelming victory.

Why, then, Commerce, should not genius dedicate its work to you? Genius itself, being simple, open and direct, is the more readily impressed by powers like yours, which are the immediate opposites of its own, complex, involved and tortuous, powers which can commandeer the law, the government and the press, the editor, the minister and the judge. You can have these prove that it is profitable to kill the alien abroad and preserve him at home. You and they can prove and make us believe that it is "*logical humanism*," "*Christian tolerance*" and "*good business*" to pay the Central European $3 to $5 a day, to help us feed our sons who are killing their brothers at a wage of $1.10 per day "and found," including graves free and ready-made.

The press, for your purposes, is busy stigmatizing human aspiration as Bolshevism, industrial reform as anarchy, equality of burden as witless socialism, and the language of faith as illogical demagoguery, and is propagating your "national policy," to show us that the way to *reduce* our burden is to *increase it*, that the way to obtain *ease* is to "*speed up*," and that we are in the lowest abyss of national dishonor if we dream of broken shackles by *repudiating* the "*Profiteers*" and "*Profits*" of the great War.

The press can, prompted by your self-protecting prescience,

spread abroad (cautiously-psychological) anticipatory defamation of Napoleon, warning us lest some genius "*unbroken*" at the head of the armies might unsheathe a sword whose brilliance would shrivel the pretensions of privilege into dust.

The Press, dependent upon you for a hurried lunch and a corrupting pass, deafened by the roar of its own whirling cogs, with vision maimed and disproportioned by the flaring type of your profitable advertisements, cannot hear the still, small voice of Truth, and, oblivious of its soul, has its straining eye fixed only on the immediate expedient of preserving its fingers and limbs from ruin in the crashing gears. For the profit on an advt. it can vilify Carlyle, call him a "dangerous demagogue," and prove him "a perverted," "peevish," "virulent," "inflammatory fool," dub him "pro-German" and "anti-French," leave him as a thing leprous, to be avoided as the plague; all as if the stern and stalwart humanist had not left written testimony that his father, a decent Scottish workman, was to him the greatest man he had ever known. "Poor Tom"!

Why, indeed, should Genius not dedicate its work to you? Power has been in the eye of Art since the birth of time. And powers like yours, unrivalled and unequalled, are surely worthy of a parallel dedication, not that I wish to laud myself by implication —God forbid. But to you, Commerce, who with complete modesty and sincerity can show that your privileges are sacred and inviolable: to you, who can slay the son and sell out the sire: to you who have taught Tommy that extermination at the hands of incompetents is the highest form of patriotism, who have taught Fritzie that successful murder validates the deed: to you, whose magic power has resuscitated feudalism, sent it a course through "equality," "human rights," "individualism," "industrialism," "big business" and "bigger trusts," and finally produced *Plutocracy*, masquerading as *Democracy* (too fat to fight, too dissipated to think, and too callous to feel): to you, the worker, of such miracles, I unhesitatingly dedicate my volume, and as I have been the first of the world's authors to make myself, by such a dedication, immortal, so also let me hope that I shall acquire a double immortality by being the last.

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THE BEAVER
AND
OTHER ODDS AND ENDS

THE PASSING OF THE AIRMAN.

Courier of the azure steeps,
With Orion holding chase;
Flashing through the diamond deeps,
Leading jocund Morn a race;
Wearied, curving from the skies—
Calm, with folded pinion, lies.

Hushed the hiss of whipping gales,
Flaying the sear altitude;
Furled from flight, quiescent sails—
Home, with Mother Earth to brood;
Home, to the maternal breast,
As the eagle to her nest.

What was dust, to dust returns,
What is soul—loosed, soars away;
Grief may wreathe her finite urns,
Filled with broken shards of clay;
But the spirit star-like sails,
Coursing the eternal trails.

Faith, girt with immediate night,
Anguish-wrung, and torture-riven,
Lifts her streaming eyes where bright
Gleam the star-lit shores of Heaven;
Comforted, beholds afar
Set one more eternal star.

"THE SPIRITS OF OUR DEAD."

Dread phantoms veil the blackening skies
In deep, portentous gloom;
And, hoarse with wrath, Destruction flies
In thunder-crashing doom.
From the heaped mountains of the slain
The floods are purpling red;
But ever on our vision flame
The Spirits of our dead.

The fabrics of an outworn day,
Sapped with consuming pride,
Sink crumbling, swiftly swirled away,
Like leaves at autumn-tide;
Faith's bloodshot eyes are drenched and dim,
Her pulses clogged with dread;
But still before our vision flame
The Spirits of our dead.

Afraid to hope, the sick world waits
Extinction's final glare;
For sinking walls and shattered gates
Unfolds her bosom bare.

The spoiler's sword, dyed red with shame,
  Reeks o'er her hapless head;
But still upon our vision flame—
  The Spirits of our dead.

Lord of the Stern Invisible,
  Whatever fate remains,
Let it not be the tyrant's hell,
  Repression's hell of chains;
Leave us no son to writhe in shame,
  To bow a helot's head;
Afraid to gaze, where deathless flame
  The Spirits of our dead.

THE HAUNTED SCHOOL-YARD.

Beneath the ghostly moon,
  The phantom striplings play;
Veiled in the humid mists of June,
  They drift in weird array.
Anon the schoolyard's trampled square
Lies empty, desolate and bare.

The moon shrinks in a cloud;
  Lithe forms of boyish mould,
Across the eerie darkness crowd
  Clear-eyed, with locks of gold.
Then fiercely through the moonlight reel,
With snarling teeth and glint of steel.

The moon peers calm and high,
The sward lies lone again;—
Lo! rank on martial rank sweep by,
Lads suddenly grown men,
Who, trampling their discarded game,
Charge flashing past in smoke and flame.

The night breeze stirs and sighs—
Its echoes swell and roll,
Till—lightning-rent—exploding skies,
Shake earth from pole to pole.
The thunders cease—like storm-swept grain,
Lie lodged the tangled swaths of slain.

Night-long the haunted sward
Seethes with dissolving shades;
Smooth, rounded brows—black, battle-scarred—
Set teeth and gory blades.
Young laughing lads in endless waves,
Wrecks and interminable graves.

The westering orb declines,
Pale with the pallid dawn;
The phantom files in fading lines,
Flow eastward and are gone.
Restoring to the God of Truth
The gift of their unsullied youth.

THE WAKING DREAM OF THE WEST-BOUND CELT.

No more I'll greet you, Erin,
  Nor tread your mystic shore,
With stranger Death, I'm fairin'
  To stranger lands, Asthore:
May be my darksome Pilot,
  Will guide with magic spell,
Myself to some charmed islet,
  To drink of Connla's well.

Sure, Erin dear, I'm weary,
  With march and battle spent,
And though I travell'd cheery,
  'Twas hard the way we went:
For Memory knew how gentle
  Were arched your azure skies,
The glint of your green mantle
  Was always in my eyes.

Though passion's wild debaters
  Wrought you the shame of knaves,
While anger called them traitors
  And pity called them slaves:
We knew—and saw before us
  Your proud eyes dark with tears,
And drowned detraction's chorus
  With charging Irish cheers.

'Twas wondrous strange, Allanna,
How, rising from the slain,
The "Finn" and the "Fianna"
Streamed martial through my brain:
From wounds, like flowing fountains,
Or springs that overboil,
High rose the purpling mountains
Whose streamlets feed the Foyle.

And through the Death-clouds gory,
Shone ever kind and wise,
Beyond, a veil of glory,
Our Irish mother's eyes:
Swift o'er the fallen foeman,
While failing sank our own;
We clove that purple gloamin'
To reach your hand, Ochone!

Calm o'er Death's sudden wonders
You lean'd to call us home,
Low-voiced above the thunders,
"Agra," you whispered, "Come":
With smiles they answered alway,
Like children to your call,
The lads from Cork and Galway,
From Down and Donegal.

Tho' Fate has blurred our vision
With speech that irks our pride;
Of bardic dreams Elysian,
Grief held us not denied:

Still through War's crimson torrent
The Harp's weird music ran;
The sob that swirls the current
Of Shannon and the Bann.

Whiles, questions all unbidden
Brood o'er the soldier's dream,
Its source and outlet hidden,
He drifts on murder's stream:
War's autumn tempests shiver
Man's leaves in blighting strife,
To float Death's swollen river,
By shores sear-stripped of life.

O, Mother Erin, grieving
For those who come no more,
It may be these are weaving
Peace for your troubled shore:
'Twere full enough if alway
Such guerdon might befall,
The lads from Cork and Galway,
From Down and Donegal.

TO A YOUNG SOLDIER

You for up the red trail,
The trail of wreck and slaughter,
Where Destruction revels wild
And Death is waiting you;

Where the shells flail red hail
  On the purpled water;
Still there's no damned mortgages
Nor notes long overdue.

You can laugh at us, boy—
  Life your sole possession,
Staking it with open heart
And a fearless jest,
We must wipe a fool's eye
  In a slave's obsession,
Quailing when the bailiff's scoop
Swipes our plundered nest.

You stormed freedom's heights, lad,
  We're but branded cattle,
Stalled until the Packer's blade
Slits our shrinking throat,
You claimed manhood's rights, lad,
  Cast both chain and chattel.
Panoplied from slavish fear,
In your khaki coat.

You have flung your load, lad—
  We in bondage hoary
Shake like craven whelps to face
The raw financial morn—
You took honor's road, lad—
  The road of death and glory.
We, like scavengers, sneak down
The alleyways of scorn.

You are safe and clean, boy—
  Death may proudly take you,
We—each fibre in our frame
Reacts to rotten coin.
Heaven when you careen, boy,
  Will an immortal make you—
Hell itself will hesitate
At us commercial swine.

Us for down the TRADE'S chute,
  With bargains filth-bespattered,
Shackled, cursed and stupefied
With mortgage bond and note,
You for up the red route
  Where Plunder's world lies shattered,
Challenging the dunghill gods
In your khaki coat.

A MOTHER'S LETTER TO HER SON

Oh son of mine, oh heart of mine,
  Life's wearing wan and sear
While listening for that step of thine
  The long year after year.
This bosom where your cheek was laid
  When crooned upon my knee
In long, long loneliness and dread
  Grows cold awaiting thee.

The maple, where the robins gay
Their spring time challenge pour
Thrice faded since you went away
Is garbed in green once more.
The hope that hides these hearts of ours
Springs to the summer rain,
But, ah for those Canadian flowers
That will not bloom again.

I watch at eve the sun go down
With memories bright ablaze,
I feel you clinging to my gown
And stretching up to gaze.
Small wonder that a mother's eyes
Swim in a faltering glance
When fear calls up the blood-red skies
And war-sown fields of France.

Ah dear, the heart of love is sore,
But I should not repine,
For Molly oft comes stealing o'er
To slip her hand in mine;
Then, boy, I smile—I would not have
Her know my boding fears,
Or think my gallant lad less brave,
For these, his Mother's tears.

And she—God knows—perhaps I thought
Her not the wife for you,
But sure in all the world there's not
A maid more rare and true,

And could I see you down the lane
  Sweet whispering as of yore,
I think 'twould dry the world's red rain,
  And heart could wish no more.

Sometimes I think your father's tread
  Is slower and less firm,
And oft I see him hold his head
  Like one who stems a storm.
He strays off many a time alone,
  The fields and woods to see,
And late returning wears a frown,
  But, Son, it's not for me.

Down to the pasture, loitering oft
  He leans upon the bars,
Just when the moon first swings aloft
  Among the shimmering stars;
And when your pair, in twilight, race,
  Halt, curious up to view
And nose their muzzles in his face,
  He says, they think it's you.

I tell you these, it seems I must,
  The heart streams, Dear, will flow;
Besides, your letters say it's just
  The little things you'd know.
And should you think my love and fear
  Make me to much repine—
You are your country's soldier, Dear,
  But you, my son, are mine.

You chose the Freeman's path, my son,
You were not born a slave,
Your breed had never choice but one—
'Twas freedom or the grave.
In courage debonair and sure
Could empty forth their veins,
Grief, exile, death they could endure
But would not sanction chains.

So always there's the proud relief
That sets my heart aflame,
'Tis easier far to hoard my grief
Than hide a coward's shame.
The love that left your mother, son,
Was kindlier far to me
Than if your task was left undone,
To shame my nursing knee.

THE MONGREL AT VIMY RIDGE

"A little mite of a dog went all the way across with us. . . . I got four Heinies. . . . missed him at dawn."—*From a soldier's letter.*

A little mite of furry noise
That frisked and frolicked with the boys,
Chummed in their bully beef and joys,
Their beds and vermin;
Fought any beast regardless size—
Cat, rat or German.

He cared no jot for Crown or Crest,
No vested interest shook his rest,
But curled against his comrade's breast,
Peace closed his eye;
While shells curved cracking east and west—
The midnight sky.

His pedigree was full sinister;
His dam, monogamy had missed her.
Unfettered, free—a lord or master—
She sniffed to scorn.
So Nip splashed into life's disaster
A mongrel born.

Snide Legal frauds might raise a roar
Re "Laws of Primogeniture,"
And floods of jurisprudence pour—
With morals crammed.
Nip heeded not a hoot their lore—
The Law be damned.

Life was his sole possession lone,
Tho' scarcely worth a bitch's groan,
The usufruct of crust or bone—
His only right—
And 'gainst all comers held his own
By dint of might.

Though to a prudish world he came,
Unregistered, without a name,

He slunk not by in slavish shame
For dam or sire;
But, scion of a reckless flame,
His blood ran fire.

The shifts of "libel" or of "tort"
To Nipper were but so much dirt,
A Court, an angry fool's resort
Of senseless chance—
So beat it like a fighting sport—
For fame and France.

His size sore subject to misprision,
His breed a butt for coarse derision.
Yet he no pacifist logician,
A fighter born,
Grim mustered with the Fourth Division
On Vimy morn.

In fierce explosions, thunderous roar,
Night lit with hell—the boys went o'er.
Commanders fell and sergeants swore
With throats aflame.
Keen and courageous to the core
Nip played the game.

* * *

While batt'ries bellowing flaming wrath
Ripped heaving gulfs across his path,
Nip scrambled on in fighting faith,
Where many a boy
Sank crumpling down in sudden death
With glazing eye.

While charging waves of infantry
Surged forward breaking like the sea,
And Death repentant quailed that he
Such havoc done;
The Mongrel in ferocious glee
Tore grimly on.

As gay through death and wreck he sped,
A Captain smiled—clutched at his head—
Through writhing lips, swift-flecked with red,
He fiercely cried:
"By—God—the cur's—a—thoroughbred"—
Fell forward. Died.

* * *

Dawn, pallid, veiled in weeping snows,
O'er that dread scene reluctant rose
Where agonized compassion knows
But one red flood,
That mingled with his friends' and foes'—
The Mongrel's blood.

One soldier who survived that hell,
Who scathless fought where thousands fell,
Wrote briefly home his luck to tell:
"Poor Nip! He's gone.
I got four Heinies. . . . Fit and well. . .
Missed him at dawn."

SONG:—"GIVE ME THE ROSE FROM YOUR HAIR, LOVE."

(He):

Give me the rose from your hair, Love,
I am for over the sea;
Freedom in gallant despair, Love,
Is calling to you and to me;
You would not keep me, I know, Dear,
Proud-eyed, devoted and true,
From the dearest on earth, from the land of my birth,
One kiss, love, and bid me "Adieu."

(She):

CHORUS.

After the battles are done, Love,
You'll find me here when you come;
After the victory is won, Love,
Waiting to welcome you home;
And should you never return, Dear,
Laid with the gallant and true;
Whate'er be the years of my waiting and tears,
Sweetheart, then I'll come to you.

(He):

Ours is the love of the free, Dear,
Ours is the land of the brave;
I could not look upon thee, Dear,
And sanction the chains of a slave;

Better to leave you alone, Love,
Better for ever to part—
Than live for a day, where a tyrant might sway
One pulse of your fetterless heart.

(*She*):

CHORUS.

After the battles are done, Love,
You'll find me here when you come;
After the victory is won, Love,
Waiting to welcome you home;
And should you never return, Dear,
Laid with the gallant and true,
Whate'er be the years of my waiting and tears,
Sweetheart, then I'll come to you.

GREY EYES.

Two changing, sad grey eyes,
With humid lightnings warm;
Filled with the clouds of wintry skies,
Drenched with the summer storm.

Dark eyes, whose shadows keep
The lights of other years;
Where passion hushes grief to sleep,
Bright with the gleam of tears.

Deep eyes, like to the sea,
After the tempest dies;
And the long swells of memory,
Subside, in melting sighs.

Proud eyes, whose daring pride,
Glows with that dread award;
For which men fling their souls aside,
To perish by the sword.

Eyes of that mystic hue,
Whose sorrows are their charm;
Wherein the old flames ever new—
The morn, sun, night and storm.

THE GIRL AND THE STAR.

(SONG)

The star that in my window peeps,
Shines also on the sea,
Whose vast and ever restless deeps,
Divide my love and me.

CHORUS:

Oh star, continue still thy smiles,
At least they light the weary miles.

Sweet signaller, whose magic art,
With tear-illumined ray,
Can flash the message of my heart
To his, tho' far away.

CHORUS:

Oh, star return with ray divine,
An answer from his heart to mine.

Bright comforter to whom 'tis given,
To share my vigil lone;
Do thou, from the deep dome of heaven,
Smile courage on my own.

CHORUS:

Be his the smile—be mine the tear,
'Tis dawn with him, tho' midnight here.

THE APRIL RAIN.

Oh, lad; the April rain,
It fills the night once more;
It teems against the window pane,
And beats upon the door:—
Dear God—if in some stricken place
It beats upon an upturned face.

You used to let it beat
Upon your tousled hair;
And I can see your boyish feet
Still dancing white and bare:—
What's left me—if in that far land
It beats upon a rigid hand?

It whispers thro' the trees;
Croons to the sobbing grass,
And flashes tearful fantasies
Upon the ghostly glass.
God help me—if the April rain
Beats at your sleeping ear in vain.

The world, son, call'd you forth,
Far from your mother's knee:—
As are the April rains to earth
So were you, boy, to me.
Ah, God, 'tis barren, barren rain,
That drenches his dear head in vain.

LITTLE—BILL.

Little Bill—Baby Bill—
When your mother—pale and sweet,
Brought you home—I felt—a—chill.
At your—tiny fists—and—feet—
Big—and awkward—scarcely—knew,
What—with—such a tot to do;
Laughed—for fear—I'd—make a spill—
Little Bill—Little Bill.

Little Bill—toddling Bill—
When they—put your—skirts—away—
Something in—my heart—stood—still,
Tho' Aunt Peggy seemed—so gay—

You—were such—a—tiny—tough—
And I—knew—the road—was—rough—
Laughed—for—fear—I'd—make—a spill,
Little Bill—Little Bill.

Little Bill—noisy Bill—
When you stretched—up—to a lad—
Climbing—croaking—scraping—pill—
Outgrew all the duds you had;
Sleeves so short, well blast the—rags!
Called you—clown and—wooden—legs—
Laughed—and—kind o'—sorry still—
Lanky Bill—Little Bill.

Little Bill—school-boy Bill
When the—world—slipp'd loose—one day,
You while—shrieked—the bugle—shrill,
Dropp'd—your—books—and—marched—away—
Tho' your—smile—and—uniform—
Left—me—shaking—like—a—storm,
Laughed for—fear I'd make—a spill,
Private Bill—Little Bill.

Soldier Bill—Sergeant Bill
Fought at Vimy—fought and—won;
Wanted wings—and—got—your—will
To go sailing at the sun—
Sure I knew you—had the heart;—
For your breed—was right to start—
Laughed to know—you—had the skill;
Little Bill—Little Bill.

Flying—Bill—fighting Bill
When the yellow cable came—
Well—by—God—I held it still—
Mother—watched—and she was—game—
"Wounded"—and it said—"severe"—
Felt as if—a grave—were—near—
Didn't—laugh—nor—make—a spill—
Wounded Bill—Little Bill.

Little Bill, oh—Little Bill—
Boy—I—know—the man you are—
But it starts—a desperate—thrill—
Thinking of you—hurt—and Far
If—I—could but see—your—eye—
Whisper—how I—love you—boy—
Sure—I'd laugh—and—cry—my fill,
Little Bill—Little Bill.

YOUTH AND LOVE.

Youth met Love one morn in Spring,
Lingering o'er the dewy flowers;
And the twain swung carrolling,
By old ruins and grey towers.
Bound for Palaces of Truth,
Worthy their unsullied youth.

Brighter rose the road and day—
Till upon the mountain-crest,
Noon-tide blazed—and far away

Fairy castles filled the west.
Youth and Love with anxious soul.
Sped to reach that shining goal.

Down the long decline of noon,
Pressing on their failing flight—
Night descended—as the moon
Wracked the towers with dubious light,
Love had fled—Youth lone and old,
Sought the ruins from the cold.

Then the moon went darkly out,
Storm-wraiths rent the shrieking sky;
While the midnight fiends of doubt,
Revelled past his sleepless eye.
Perishing, he whispered "Death,
I, alas, mistook the path."

Death, the cold, but ever kind,
Answered in his dying ear:
"Comfort, Son, your weary mind;
Every path of Life leads here.
I your secret close will keep;
Mourn no more, poor heart, but sleep."

Then—hushed from the roaring storm,
—Loosing off his toil-born dread;
Drooping o'er Death's icy arm,
Heedless sank the hapless head.
One more grief-wrung, wandering waif,
From his heritage made safe.

THE PASSING OF THE OLD RHYMER

Sitting in the gathering dark
  While the shades of life descend,
Peering thro' the shadows—Hark!
  Who is't that calls?—a moment, friend—
    Sure that voice brooks no delay—
    Let me put my work away.

Work—it seems a sorry jest—
  When I buckled to at morn,
Lavish of ambition's best
  What knew I of Fortune's scorn?
    What knew I of Failure's pain?
    Nothing—there's that cry again!

God! the sunlight on the hills,
  Oh! the dew upon the flowers,
Oh! the laughter of the rills,
  Ah! young passion's rapturous powers.
    Then the clear meridian sun—
    Hist! Ah yes, I'm almost done.

Glorious—now the night is here,
  Earth and I a palsied pair,
Stagnant in the night-mists drear,
  Comrades in a cold despair.
    Death—why Death, you are not gone—
    Wait—don't leave me here alone!

LINES WRITTEN ON A SOLDIER'S ASSIGNED PAY CHECK, NUMBER S-46208, NOV. 1st, 1917

Since 'tis "a kind of incest to take life
  Out of a sister's shame"; then how much more
Murder—to coin the crimson floods of strife
  And eat this payment of our offspring's gore?
    But wolfish *business*, with inhuman tongue,
    May crouch and lick its chops and gorge—unhung.

TO A YOUNG FRIEND ON HIS MARRIAGE

Youth, my son, was ever bold,
  Then the heart controls the head,
Caution dogs the old and cold
  Like a shadow of the dead.
But the young, proud, unafraid,
  Fearless reck no future storm,
Wars and wedlock hold no dread
  For the blood that's keen and warm.

Wise old ginks who long since sped
  Through life's morning gates of pearl,
Thoughtless, buoyant, undismayed
  At the bidding of a girl,
Hailing heaven in the curl
  Shining on a snowy neck,
Challenging destruction's whirl—
  These now sit expounding wreck.

Still the trip was worth the price
If the past we could restore,
Wisdom would dissolve like ice
To the tears it was before.
We would shoot the chutes once more,
No one when the morning smiles
Speculates, or ponders o'er,
Darkness and the midnight miles.

Why then ask you to excel
The prescience that your fathers had;
You have youth, love and a "gel,"
All the rest is punk, begad.
I'll not damp your ardor, lad,
Hooting like an owlish prig;
You have reason to be glad,
Wedded youth's a wholesome rig.

And, besides, life's but a jest,
Just a trick the gods have played
In their after dinner zest,
Bribing some elysian jade.
Well, a dandy mess they've made;
Let them like it, if they can,
But for us without parade,
We'll submit and play the man.

Finally I wish you joy,
Also marital success,
And with many a girl and boy
Means to find them food and dress;

Gumption to avoid excess
In the maze of love and life,
And may no fool folly stress
The tie that binds you to your wife.

P. S.—

Doubtless there'll be many a storm
Sweep across the happiest years,
Love too wears a soberer charm
When plain housewife she appears.
Often little tiffs and tears,
Always the stern need to live;
But true bosoms vanquish fears—
They're forgiven, who forgive.

ON THE APOTHEOSIS OF A GOOD FRIEND AND GALLANT OFFICER, KILLED— 'SOMEWHERE IN FRANCE'

Together we fought many a scrap,
Gave dunts and blows, got many a rap,
Stemm'd many a flood, bridged many a gap,
But Death's fell chance
Struck you, remorseless, from the map,
"Somewhere in France."

Thro' ten stern years of arduous toil,
In torrent, rock, and treacherous soil,
Strong-strained a competence to spoil
From Nature's grip,
You kept your equipoise and smile
And kindly quip.

Your wit, to Love was next-of-kin,
It pierced but did not flay the skin,
Through mental shades keen glancing in
The bosom warmed,
Till sombre thought relaxed its grin,
To laughter charmed.

Like morn upon the mountain peak
Your jests in shafts of light would break,
Like winds that under snow wreaths seek
The flowers that dream,
Till care ran rippling down the cheek
A laughing stream.

St. Peter, foutering rusty keys,
Beard flaring to his gasping wheeze,
Fumbling his lean rheumatic knees
And creaking back,
Transfigured in that genial breeze,
Will welcome "Mac."

Then all the saints, austere and wise,
And radiant forms in angel guise
Rejoicing in a glad surprise,
Will chant, "Hurray,"
"Lo, Heaven is now a Paradise,
Mac's come to stay."

But should the Great Tribunal dread
Demand credentials from the dead,
Your calm resource and level head

Won't suffer loss;
You'll ask them, smiling, undismayed,
To "Wire the boss."

And sure, old chap, I'll say for you,
All human love and faith hold true,
And if some narrow rigid Jew
Prates pious fraud,
I'll tell the Judge with reverence due—
He lies, by God.

Still, if for faults or slips unknown
Law, bloodless, thunders forth, "Begone,"
Compassion's Lord, The Gracious One
Will answer then,
"Father, receive him as Thy son,
He died for men."

Some are good fellows when they spend,
Some purchase worship when they lend,
Some, tardy charities defend
Their worthless head,
You were a Prince from start to end,
Alive or dead.

If love might slip a last advice,
You've put one over, landed nice,
You've won, don't play a long shot twice,
Be good, be grave,
Beneath the Omni-present Eyes,
You must behave.

If some stray rare Delilah brings
A sparkling cup on rustling wings,
If witching human charm still clings
To forms divine,
The lure that ruins clowns and kings,
Dear Mac, decline.

Still, if that Heaven, so little known,
Prove more Mahomet's than our own,
Vital with vibrant flesh and bone,
Not shapes of air,
Trust you to nail—if let alone—
A soldier's share.

If Privilege there maintain its state,
As priestly pride would indicate;
If idlers feast while workers wait,
Don't jump the job,
Stay with the stuff that shames the great,
"The toiling mob."

We here, storm-whipped on starless seas,
Torn with the racked world's agonies,
Thank God, that, having fought for Peace
She furled your sails
To roam for ever at your ease,
Th' Elysian vales.

To Dr. ———

RETURNING

'SOURCES OF CANADIAN WEALTH.'

Here, old neighbor, is your book,
  Sure it proves but what we knew,
Finance a mendacious crook,
  Thief and swindler, sneak and Jew,
Plundering mankind as its due,
  Waving flags to hide its fraud;
Flaunting as a patriot, too,
  Stealing in the name of God.

Whether it be fads or beads,
  Brandy black, or whisky blanc;
Priests' or Preachers' mildewed creeds,
  Or a charter, spawned of law;
All are means to gorge the maw,
  Of the parasitic brood—
Who in "S-(elfish) solemn awe,"
  Praise and call Damnation good.

'Tis a "twice-told tale," no doubt;
  This foul yarn of avarice,
How a race was blotted out
  By our civilizing vice;
Vengeance wakes—but scarce precise.
  Balancing the Indian's score
By "Vicarious Sacrifice,"
  Sixty-fold, and somewhat more.

Yet the furtive Grafter thrives;
Well may Truth and Merit sigh,
Steal your neighbor's wealth and wives,
Gold will get the rapsters by;
To a Peerage—whose supply—
—What's the use of mincing words?—
Mostly were, else histories lie,
Thieves and bastards, "Good, my lords."

To our theme, Sir, let us hope
Myers will wake our dozing crew;
Tho' 'tis "damned pro-German dope,"
—Club that brains dissent that's true—
Power with his puny view,
Post-cure with his saintly leer,
Warn with unctuous "Pooh Pooh,"
"Quiet, or the Hun will hear."

By the strong immortal gods,
'Twould humiliate a slave,
Passive, choked, while privileged frauds
Dig the Empire's shameful grave;
Everything we had we gave:—
Flung to parvenues and snobs;
Dopesters, neither wise nor brave,
But, worse luck, they hold their jobs.

Grim Carlyle, in angry mood,
Charged that "God did nothing"—Yea,
Tom was wont to think and brood,
'Tis a habit Scotchmen "hae";

Lord be praised he didn't say,
Satan ceased to stoke his hell,
If he had, God's sake what way
Reach a reckoning with Snivelle?

We might scald the wretch in brine,
With his "*Young* Men" and his peers;
Pickle him with his own swine,
Burn him with his chanticleers;
Place him in the Arctic spheres,
Gazing on the fires of Hell,
Pleading thro' his lying tears,
Take me home, I'm Snide Snivelle.

Rotten Snide is not alone
E'en in flat Fort William, we
Have some Fat Flies, bloated, blown,
Foul as Commerce' spawn can be;
Prison-missed-hypocrisy
Swiped his millions off last year;
White men fight, the yellow fry,
Skin the soldier's sire here.

This is but a sample speck,
We've got half a hundred more
Flourishing on ruin's wreck,
Scalping Mortgages galore;
Lifetime savings of the poor,
Swiped to make the rich more rich;
Would it not make Jesus sore,
And red murder's fingers itch?

Sir, you'll say I'm pretty coarse,
But my theme is far from fine;
I, myself, prefer a verse,
With a breath of the Divine;
Wafting rose or eglantine,
Songs of children, brooks and birds—
Dawn above the hills of pine—
But, behold the shambled herds.

I'll not wail of broken hearts
And the faith that's nearly gone:
Rather, damn the filthy arts,
Make of human souls a stone;
Then, tho' drifting, chartless, lone,
My frail derelict of rhyme,
May on some far shore unknown
Beach its record of "Our Time."

TO MY FRIEND MOORE.

Byron drank a health to Moore;
He had wine and Po-es-ie,
That same name I pledge galore,
Tho' I've only rhymes and tea;
Still the critic must agree
I imbibe celestial brew,
Hell—Helicon—oh! Pardon me,
Slaintę—health—and luck to you.

To be sure, George was a lord,
I'm a scion of the mob;
Tom was but a vagrant bard,
You must knuckle to your job.
They wore laces, sword and fob,
Gambled, girled and fought their foe;
We can neither kill nor rob,
Freedom perished long ago.

Freedom's gone where Genius bides,
"Pork" the prudent—greased her skids;
Now the ginks of rinds and hides
On her corpse have clamped the lids.
Fame is punk to dazzle kids,
Pork, Cement and Pulp wield power;
Such as Decency forbids,
Genius in its loftiest hour.

Well-a-day for Fate's decree,
Tripe and sausage dubbed a "Sir";
Gad, it's great to grin and see
Stale Bologna wearing fur.
Fine to hear a furtive cur—
Squatted on his rotting hoard,
With a righteous solemn burr-rr,
Preaching *abstinence*—"Oh, Lord!"

Let's be thankful wit is gone,
Let's rejoice that genius died;
Long it is since greed has shown
Little's left but gut and hide.

Democracy's foul carrion, flied,
Its maggots maggotted, vile, stinks,
Beyond the point that's purified,
By poets' pens or printers' inks.

So Retribution fierce as bold,
Firm as inexorable Fate,
Flings mankind from its chase of Gold,
With tears of blood to cleanse the slate.
Though Plunder's unregenerate,
God wot! can scarce believe it yet—
Tithes and titles must await
Sanction by the bayonet.

Pardon me that I digress,
Also if I slipped a cog;
Scansion holds but scant duress
O'er a bard aflight in fog.
Homer used to nod—"The Dog!"
Sam will pardon me his phrase,
Would the moralist could "shog"
Death in these immoral days.

Honor to the slumbering wits,
Let's not take their names in vain,
Sleeping, through our vision flits
Thunderous murder, war's "red rain,"
Death and *death* and *death* again.
Let's get back where I began:
I a Chinese chalice drain,
Triple-charged, to Moore—the man.

P.S.—

I have done what Caution asked,
Camouflaged, re-writ—you brute!
Murdered, mystified and masked;
Exorcised the cloven foot.
Here's your Stentor, cut to suit,
In a boy-soprano's gown;
Jove, too, tinkering, to transmute
Thunderbolts to thistledown.

TO AN OTTAWA CORRESPONDENT.

Hush, you sacrilegious scamp:
How the blazes dare you throw
Jewish bombshells in the Camp
Of the sanctified Sir Joe?
First thing, quirkster, that you know,
You'll be squirming in the grasp
Of some censor set to show
Truth's an angry, envious wasp.

Gad, I stagger at your nerve,
Raising such a traitorous row—
"Silent suffer," "Save and Serve,"
"King and Country need you now."
Eat your heresy and bow,
Placation unto Pork or see,
Privilege or some fool bow-wow.
Clap the gag on you with "Mee."

Just because you had the luck
To exchange the Stratford bog
For the Parliamentary muck,
Where you're clarifying fog;
That's not license full to jog
Wealthy Cits with country wit;
Keep your skill to scald a hog,
Where such special talents fit.

That's a scene—once far from town,
Where the low November cloud
Streaks with hail the furrows brown—
Test of how the ploughmen plowed;
Where the sturdy, rural crowd
Gathered by the wood-shed when,
Poor doomed hoggie wailed aloud,
As they lugged him from his pen.

'Neath the cauldron's bubbling zest,
Knots that long defied the axe;
Flaming in a last protest.
Demonstrated rigid fac's;
Though the crooked, tougher wax,
Sun-dried, scarred with seam and notch;
Time will sure collect his tax,
Fire will split the gnarliest crotch.

All the ancient knives were ground,
We have seen the water drip
As it wibble-wobbled round
From the grindstone's under lip;

Seen the scalding barrel a-tip
Long ere we turned city prigs,
Shameless felt the primal grip
Homeric, in "the killing pigs."

Struggling, canted on his back,
Swift the "sticker's" fatal art,
Trenching first the quivering neck,
Plunged his blade toward the heart.
"Porcus," loosed with lurching start,
Staggered through his reeking tide,
Shrieking fell and, limbs apart,
Sank collapsed upon his side.

While some curious younger lad
Wide-eyed, gazed in brave dismay,
Shocked how frail a tenure had
Life, that redly streamed away;
Scraped the hocks, or, loudly gay,
Filled the bladders with his breath;
Night—in huddled terror lay
To dream of Mystery and Death.

Memory picks long-rusted locks,
Turnips pulled and stored away;
Corn stood rustling in the shocks,
Fenced the settled stacks of hay.
From the pasture cold and gray,
Early trailed the lowing herd,
Sheltering from the blustering day,
Knee-deep in the straw-strewn yard.

Chance a loose-limbed colt or two
  Nipped, and reared, in fighting-wise;
Snorting, raced, then stood to view,
  The landscape's dark prophetic guise;
  Then, with mane about their eyes,
Tails wind-blown along their flanks,
  Sobered by the scudding skies,
Sought the cattle's solemn ranks.

Loaded down the distant hill,
  By the maples bleak and bare
Clinked the waggon from the mill,
  Hauled by Billy's prancing pair.
  Mother with maternal air,
Glancing through the kitchen door,
  Murmured, as she saw them there,
"Must have passed the school at four."

This, be sure, was long ago;
  No cold-storage bandits then,
Coining titles from our woe,
  Made one hog the price of ten.
  You and I, plain sons of men,
Simple scions of the farms,
  Dreamt not of a future when
Pigs' feet decked a coat-of-arms.

We've ate dainties ere the Trust
  Struck the rural Paradise,
Lard that crinkled in the crust
  Of our mother's apple pies.

Curse their snide monopolies,
Blast their cotton seed and smut,
Head cheese now's a greased disguise,
Gristle stuffs a tougher gut.

We were wont to turn the hides,
Into saddles, harness, boots;
Now we rack dyspeptic sides
Gizzarding the skins and cloots;
Now the furtive, titled brutes
Curse for apathetic sins,
Sweep what's toothsome down the chutes
Of their damned cold-storage bins.

Lord, 'twould make a saint rebel
Listening, with a rumbling maw,
Hanna, plaster for Snivelle,
Preaching abstinence, Oh Pshaw!
While the fakes at Ottawa
Hid behind commission bunk,
Set some lawyer's rotten jaw
To deodorize a skunk.

We, by Gad, have learned a heap
In this age of ice and guns,
Pigs are dear, but men are cheap,
Plunderers are the honored ones.
Sure, "We must defeat the Huns,"
Commerce dins it in our ears,
Swapping for our slaughtered sons
Baronetcied Profiteers.

These Commissions are a joy,
  Talk of an "enamelling" job;
They can make the Truth a lie,
  Or an honest man of Bob.
  Well, it may deceive the mob
And perhaps make him a duke,
  But, despite the Tellier daub,
Some of us still know a crook.

Pardon me that I digress,
  Give me leave, Sir, to observe
Rhyme's Parnassian express
  Shows her brilliance on the curve;
  Genius dearly loves to swerve,
Hates like hell the humdrum pave;
  She has nothing if not nerve,
Never was—and—loathes—a slave.

There I go again, bedad,
  What I started out to say
Was that you, my clever lad,
  Better mend your errant way;
  Or the autocrats who sway
Governments, and Trusts and Banks,
  They, be sure, will find a way
To discount your gamesome pranks.

When you buck the bandit crew,
  Turning searchlights into graft,
They will plunge their blade in you
  Biff!—clean to the bubbling haft;

Black Hand's but a puerile craft,
These have mankind by the throat;
You'll regret that you have laughed
At our Plunderers—now scoot!

TO W——— L———

Swept from our vision like a tale that's told,
You, called an Empire builder, pass away,
While veteran legions leaderless behold
Their idol, shrink to less than common clay.
Leaving a record for a cynic's gibe,
"Not for Mankind, but only for his tribe."

You were a scholar, master of that tongue
In which the greatest Captain of all time
Saluted freedom when by France upflung,
He struck the shackles from her limbs sublime.
You also knew the speech that thundered forth,
"Freedom for France but also for the Earth."

Where is that Gallic clarity of mind
Whose intuition leaps o'er logic's pause?
Where is that skill and courage war-refined
That made the Roman Caesar set his jaws?
Rides the Phoenician bar Massillia's waves
Since their descendants yield assent to slaves?

Could statesmanship ally with factious chiefs
Who fan the embers of sedition's fires,
Who damn all flame as a Promethean thief's,
That does not glitter from their tinselled spires.
Dreading the lightning of the cosmic wreck
Might pierce the sightless orbs of blind Quebec.

Like flaying March, war thunders over earth
Threatening the Arctic winter of the soul,
The sterterous gasps of a gigantic birth
Cracking the icecaps of the mental pole.
Where, frozen deep, dark superstitions cling
Shrunk from the flashing glow of melting spring.

Rather for them the thrall of glacial night,
It's deadly barrenness, it's soulless cold,
Than that the morning of creative light
Should loose the floods and see a world new-poled.
Rather lie dormant in that dread embrace
Of the eternal midnight's sunless waste.

Faith, blushing, hears the truth recite her quips,
"Debased poltroonery that stands aside
Thanking its gutless god with pallid lips,
That it still lives for valiant fools have died."
If this be History's measure of your fame
Creation has not space to hide your shame.

Shall the chained nations of the future stare
In stupid wonder at your recreant deed,
And view their manacles in dull despair,

Locked with the sanction of your cringing breed?
Is that the goal for which you urged your toil—
Tyrants absolved, and slaves without a soil?

If you have deemed the Fiction of Finance
A viler fetter than the Hun designs,
If you repudiate the Faith of France
"That Freedom's worthless that excludes the mind."
Or think that Britain's dead are cynics, you
Deserve our pardon and compassion too.

Granted that Commerce, brazen and obese
Coins the heroic blood to swell her hoard
That her foul selfish palm so drips with grease,
It slips the hilt of the reluctant sword.
These are no warrant for defection's role
And cheapening more democracy's cheap soul.

Nay, rather you should prove your ancient blood
Who challenged Europe, dauntlessly and high,
And fought for liberty astride the flood
And died as only the heroic die.
Fired with the fervour of creation's mind
They dignified their race, with it—mankind.

Turn to the Celtic seer, as proud as you,
He bursts the confines where his race was driven,
In rapt sincerity, flings forth anew
Their deathless faith in liberty and heaven.
With trump prophetic smites the Cambrian hills
Till Freedom's shaken soul, exalted thrills.

If, ears grown dull, this too remote may seem,
At least, our mighty kinsman you have heard
Who burst the spell of his scholastic dream,
And to Columbia's thigh restored her sword.
And to the tyrant his stern challenge hurled,
"Freedom and peace the birthright of the world."

What shall be said of you—"that hopes grown sear
You cloaked yourself in fallacies and made
Your name a text for tyranny's dark sneer
Freedom's bold champion turned a renegade?
In cold evasion counselling debate
While foul Attila thundered at the gate."

If that your bosom stricken to the core,
Its ideals wrecked, its foundings swept away,
Sought solace where the fallen great of yore
Found refuge dim, where misty censers sway.
Where passive rites bestow fictitious balm,
Steeping the soul in anaesthetic calm.

These, thought might pardon, not your bid for power
Where bitter foes with hated foeman league
Where rally round you, in your failing hour,
Vain nondescripts of passion and intrigue.
Whose faith's suspicion, loyalty, distrust,
Whose courage, cowardice—whose souls are dust.

Alas! the dreams of youth's aspiring morn
When fragrant splendours gild the dewy way,
Alas! the failing heart of faith forlorn
When hopes grow darker with declining day.
Woe worth the world's belief in truth and right
When sinks her sun in the abysmal night.

THE NATURALIST AND HIS SCHOLARS AT THE INTERNATIONAL ZOO, 1917.

THE NATURALIST.

Closes now the murderous year,
What "o' God's name have we here"?
What has human progress seen
In the dread year '17?
Freshly filled three million graves,
Fifty million fighting slaves,
Marshalled in their youth to die
For a cause that's half a lie.
They have cults and creeds and flags,
Field grey, blue-grey, khaki rags.
And each fights for liberty,
As if he himself were free.
I'll not talk of this to you;
Let us scan the fighting Zoo.

THE LION.

Mark the Lion, stiff and sore,
Mauled and maimed, yet game for more,
Bandaged till he scarce can sneeze,
Yet not "beaten to his knees";
Snarling to disguise the smart,
Draining deep his dauntless heart.
Grim and resolute as fate,
Almost stupidly sedate,

Death-determined not to lose
Freedom, folly or his booze;
Swearing, while he skimps his food,
"Prohibition is a Prude."
Freedom's his and sure 'tis known
One can squander what's their own,
And can buy—with sick parades—
Liberty for London jades.

Poor old Lion! See your cubs,
Wasted by your valiant dubs—
Dubs as brave as ever stept,
And as fearless as inept,
Lazy as the petted fox,
Game as gamest of game cocks,
But with wealth's acquired quirk,
'Gainst that "Damned annoyance—work."
Time ne'er bred a braver bunch,
But they lack the Crecy punch
And the dash of Agincourt,
Something that's worth thinking o'er.

Lion with the fearless poise.
And the faith that never dies.
Lion with a battle hymn
In the structure of each limb;
You with liberty's refrain
Thundering in your threatening mane,

You whom freedom littered forth
To a tyrant-trampled earth,
You with world-embracing blood,
Salted by the storm-swept flood,
Let not luxury's repose
Make you carrion for crows.

Leisure sure develops mind,
Calm, judicial and refined,
Leisure in the pre-war year
Flowed like graphite on a gear;
But her halcyon days are o'er;
You must don your jeans once more,
Drain your lakes and till your lawn,
Cultivate your wheat and brawn;
Fling your spindles in the sea,
Re-create your yeomanry.

You have found 'twill scarcely serve,
Making earth a game preserve.
Your intentions of the best
To uplift and all the rest,
Might if stripped immediate mist
Prove you but an egotist.
Nature's self can scarcely say
Whose way is the wisest way,
Has not yet made up her mind
As to quality or kind;
Seems experimenting still,
Kills a Christ and crowns a Bill,
Shackles Johnson to a word,

Makes a king of George the Third.
Re-restores the Bourbon block,
Chains Napoleon to his rock;
Honors men whose brains are nil,
Cracks a wolf-hide on Magill.
Thence reflection might suppose
She still sticks 'twixt cons, and pros;
And if nature hesitates
As to values, modes and fates,
Men may be excused who weigh
Mentally the *Great To-day.*
Deeming e'en benignant power,
As of dubious race and hour;
Doubtless, Folly you will deem,
Such suspicions are a scream.
Well—when you exhaust your mirth,
Take a quiet look at earth.

Power has that unpleasant trick,
Turning those it trammels sick;
Cursed, too, with a serious fault,
Its effect is still revolt.
These withal its natal hour,
Starts the processes of power,
Sets it bolstering up its fakes,
Dealing patronage and cakes,
Framing serviceable frauds,
Setting up subservient gods;
Nor content with gods alone,
Wants each devil like its own.

Still despite successive waves
Beating mankind back to slaves,
Still despite the bloody plain,
Where faith sickens o'er the slain;
Still despite the conquering lord
—Safe while bleeds his harnessed horde—
Still amid repressive murk
There's a ceaseless force at work;
Power can never get designed
Fetters for the chainless mind.

Self expression is a view,
Old, altho' the phrase is new.
Its activities would seem
Like the ocean-fated stream,
Which confined, repressed, or jammed,
Bursts at last, however dammed;
Damming but conserves its force,
Bound to find the sea its source.

There are difficulties, true,
At inception of the new,
And the human mind long maimed,
Hugs its vices unashamed.
Clutching as a faith sublime,
'Misery is the twin of time,'
While the wary idlers spy
Changes with suspicion's eye.

Paint and powder dread the storm,
Privilege shudders at reform,
They, so daintily uncurled,
From the cocoon of the world,
Frown at further alterings
That would soil their flaunting wings,
Certain, too, creation lies
Spread, for loitering butterflies.
And that change which brought them forth
Should henceforward cease on earth.

Power who has her patent got,
Cinched on comfort's corner lot,
Proves from history's jostling lies,
Change is dangerous and unwise.
Claiming, too, our human plight
Is, tho' faulty, almost right;
Quite convinced that sin and fate
Both preclude a happier state;
Bosh that sanctified and sage
Is the gospel of the age.

This aside at what it's worth,
"*Petty*," "*puerile*" and so forth;
—I repeat what sense surmised
And the war has emphasized;
Power has found it will not serve,
Making earth a game preserve.
Poachers and gamekeepers are
Still at war or plotting war.

In the keeper poachers see
Hunger's bloated enemy;
And the keeper firm believes
Poachers are unlicensed thieves.
Keepers quote "possession's" laws,
Poachers cite their empty maws:
Property proclaims its fief,
Brands the poacher as a thief.
Poverty cries "Bah! Flim-flammed;
That for you! the law be damned!"
"Right is Might," possession cries;
"Might is Right," his foe replies.
Might shall say then who is right,
So they tumble, too, to fight—
School boys brawling, fit to burst,
"Saw it first!" "I got it first!"

Just so economic lords
Pass from *arguments* to *swords*,
Drop their cant of "seas" and "suns,"
Clutch torpedoes, bombs and guns,
Pass them to the gaping mobs,
" Fight, you yaps, or lose your jobs."

Then with bloody mugs and crowns,
Downs and ups and ups and downs;
Tommy, Tony, Jean and Fritz,
Blast each other into bits;
Slathered thick with wounds and blood,
Also glory, lice and mud;
Then some diplomatic guy
Nails Fate's half-averted eye,

Says "the gods themselves have willed
No more 'sacred blood' be spilled;"
That "such wise and valiant foes
Should concede the world repose";
Hints that "Reason mediate
O'er the questions in debate";
All so simple—Reason swore—
Why in hell not do't before?

With the armistice declared,
Come the Plenis primed, prepared,
Each runs his inspired course,
Heralds forth his vast resource,
Hints the armies—this with pain—
Can, though halted, march again;
All the ancient fictions vie
Who shall spring the loftiest lie.
Commerce, sneering up her sleeve,
Listens to this make-believe;
Commerce, with her foxy nose,
Selling friends and buying foes,
Tickled with the margin made
Out of death's "decaying trade,"
Thinks 'twere damned good business now,
To conclude the bloody row;
And a better paying spec,
Loaning to rebuild the wreck.
Sends the soldier right-about,
"Friendship's sealed; cut hatred out.
"Buy a wooden leg and brag,
"Trade, you simp, still dogs the flag."

Finally the fighting firms
Come to honorable terms—
After men have bled and toiled,
Split the spoils already spoiled.
Both sides make a few more Dukes,
Mobs limp back to work—Gadzooks!

THE BEAVER.

'18 sees the Beaver wake,
Sally forth to mend the break,
When the ice cracks at the shore,
In his lodge the waters lower.
Busy at it tooth and nail,
Worker from his head to tail;
Neither skilled to plot nor preach,
Tumbles too, to plug the breach;
Shirker, thief, nor profiteer,
There's a break; his job is there;
Head an axe and tail a trowel,
Hasn't time to raise a howl.
Though his foe remorseless lurks,
Wrecks his engineering works:
When the fiftieth wreck is done,
His repairs make fifty-one.

Little Beaver, you have stood
Long immersed in ice and mud;
Pestered by the logic nice,

"Virtue thrives on mud and ice!
Building dams and skating rinks,
Growing furs for grafting ginks—
Fools who see but starry skies,
Reckless what beneath them lies,
Or that loosed the waters flow,
Wearing out the ice below.

Long exploiting your preserve,
Thoughtless idlers circling swerve,
While their smooth support wears thin,
Laughing in the builder's skin;
Careless, too, that, in the mud,
Toilers strain to stem the flood.

Beaver, must it still be said
Yours is but a woodman's head,
That your marshes, creeks and streams,
Mark the boundaries of your dreams?
Must the privileged lie prevail,
All your skill lies in your tail,
That you scarcely need a chain,
Fettered by a leaden brain?
That, the dupe of plundering curs,
You will furnish floods and furs;
Toil till all their want's supplied,
Then present them with your hide?

Beaver, you have much to learn,
Save your fur to shield your stern;
Nor, while grafters sport your coat,
Face the storm, a sans-culotte.

There are thoughtful folk who think
Those who skate should build the rink,
And that those who sail the flood,
Should not sniff at worker's mud.
Custom fat, may belch her "buts,"
Bah! you proved you have the guts;
And a structure could uprear
Worthy any engineer.
Teach the knaves who bag your spoil,
You can think as well as toil.

You could dam and delve and dredge,
Till you flooded "Vimy Ridge."
At "The Somme," in patent pain,
Gnawed the German trunk in twain;
At "St. Julien" Heinie's crew
Found you were amphibious too.
Gas—you grinned to see it come,
Wafting memories of home;
And in water, gas or air,
At the break they found you there.

Doubtless, if the notion come,
You can drown the frauds at home;
Bourassa, "he mak' de slam,"
Threatening the Dominion Dam;
Well—he haunts the lower reach,
Let them dodge who make the breach.

Little Beaver, keen to toil,
That's your patent to the soil;
Fear no Cabal clique nor mob,
While you knuckle to your job;

Always while the dam's your own,
You can drown or strand the drone.
  Little Beaver, staunch and square,
Faith for you exhales A *Prayer*.

Lord, whatever else you do,
Save us from the parvenu;
From the noisy newly-rich,
Scorched with the notorious itch.
  The aristocrat, has shown
His nobility's his own,
That his courage is a part
Of his mind and gallant heart.
Not a dusty mantle torn
From its nail and seldom worn;
Not a relic from the shelf—
But that he is valor's self;—
Careless of heroic lies,
Gamely fights, and calmly dies.

But the soulless lords of trade
Shirk, and dodge, and funk, afraid,
Pleading with their craven's breath,
Any—anything, but death.
Offering publicly their coin
To escape the fighting line,
  Some with still a sense of shame,
And the coward's itch, for fame,
Shelter in a uniform,
Far behind the battle-storm.
Refuse of the distant wars

Stalk the bastard sons of Mars;
Draw their pay and twirl their sticks,
Thro' some pull in politics,
Ribbons on their bosom spread,
Just the same as if they'd bled.
Maybe granted for a wench
Captured in some London Trench.
D.S.O.'s, and Honors, too,
Showered upon the skulking crew;
Lord forbid that knavish nerve
Swamps the knightly creed "I Serve."

Save us from the Kings of Oil,
Kings of Plunder and of Spoil;
Emperors may be fearsome things,
But, God save us from these kings;
And Oh, Lord, our Father, plug,
Off-hand, the Baron-ial "bug."
Artists they of gall and bluff,
Bold and impudent enough;
Do not countenance their cause,
Adding titles and applause;
Chaps who think it proof of brain,
Lauding exploitation's reign;
Bullion-bloated grown through stealth,
Flare abroad to swank their wealth,
And no longer rooting coin,
Think themselves no longer swine.
That the charities they dole
Rehabilitate the soul.
Having skinned him all they can,
Posing as the friends of man.

These long-dodging Mr. Lynch,
Deem philanthropy a cinch,
Think bombastic gifts control
The recording angel's roll.
Do not raise above the mud
Scamps who coined the soldier's blood;
Let not plunder dignified
Under specious titles hide,
Cloak not in illustrious guise,
Men whose faiths, and lives were lies;
Let them since it scarce deceives,
Bear the names they wore as thieves.

Let not pork and post-cured ham,
Tho' the curer feels "no qualm,"
Tho' he shameless sneers at shame,
Serve as stepping-stones to fame;
But let decency, restored,
Blast them with contempt, O Lord.

God forbid ignoble pulp—
Fawning, like a cringing whelp,
On the hand that heaped his plate,
Ask us to become his mate;
Drag us to his level dread,
Wooden heart, and wooden head.
Grant that power to water stocks
Turn us not to concrete blocks;
And forbid cement should bind
In one stolid mass the mind.
Masses may appeal to class,
Leave us life within the mass.

Save us from the scribbling tribe,
Chained by interest, flogged by bribe,
They are easily discerned,
Dunces—schooled—but never learned;
Full of cheap experience crammed,
Not a principle, not shammed;
Droning their infernal cant,
"We write what the public want";
Charging their incompetence
To the people's want of sense;
Shrinking from that woman's hell,
To be made responsible;
Making others their excuse,
For the nonsense they produce;
Let them, Father, sink from sight,
Back in to their native night;
Silhouettes of darkness born,
Fading in the light of morn.

Grant a further warm request,
Save us from our special Pest,
Punch and Judys of the quill,
Puppets of the master's will;
Tricked in raw dramatic art,
Each to play his ordered part:
Creaking to the pressure bland
Of the showman's hidden hand;
Thundering Liberty and Law,
As he works their wooden jaw:
Praise or damn, support or flop,
As the juggler works the stop;

Combatting in conflict dire,
While the gaping mobs perspire.
Battling on the verge of death,
Till the gazers gasp for breath;
Flourishing their wooden swords,
But subsiding down to words,
Just like editorial ire,
Flare and fizzle and expire;
Coining in contention's mist,
Cash for the ventriloquist.

Spare us, too, the Preaching Guys,
Snivelling platitudes and lies;
Who, long-nurtured in pretence,
Think emotion must be sense,
And that "Glory" and "Amen,"
Poises fate upon their pen.
These in deep religious guise,
Posing as inspired wise,
In their hallowed dreams "and things,"
Tip the nod to clowns and kings;
They for ills of man or brute,
Have solutions made to suit;
But at youth their art is aimed,
Tender minds are easiest maimed.
These of ten year olds the rage,
Guarantee one cry per page;
"Near seduction" is their cue,
Straight adultery would not do;
Churchmen, too, have business tact,
Want their tithes before the act.

From degeneracy's horde
Shelter and protect us, Lord;
And especially from the hook
Of the coarse pot-boiling crook,
Who while sensual suckers wait
Dangles down seduction's bait;
  Filling adolescence' eye:—
Garments glued to hip and thigh,
Bosom's wave but half confined
Threatening to engulf mankind;
Touch of hip and knee and arm,
One wild palpitating charm,
One wild tempest of remorse,
And "Oh God" and "Lost," of course,
Exclamations which convey
Virtuous horror and dismay,
Make the writers' aims secure,
Clean and ethically pure.
  Thus they hunt the heroine
Down to ruin line by line,
Skilled to stock corruption's mart
With the culls of Cleland's art.

Save us from the cynic's lie,
Gold can bribe, corrupt or buy;
Save us from our damned belief
That success was born a thief.
From the deadly cult that Right
Is that blood-stained monster, Might;
Save us from the lust of pelf,
Also save us from ourself;

Strip us of our passive creeds,
Cobwebs and complacent weeds;
Strip us of our special vice,
Narrow racial prejudice;
Show us, Father, that the Sun
"Shines on all alike," when done.

Let not patriotism be
Clap-trap to enslave the free.
Bogey cunningly designed
To repress the inquiring mind;
Warped by thieves to suit the times
And consolidate their crimes;
Let it not be made defence
For the fool incompetence;
Let it not be forced to yield
For the Cult of Prey a shield;
Or be made—per Johnson's vogue—
Final refuge for the rogue;
Let not hatred of our foes
Make us pliant dupes of those
Who manipulate the mobs
To ensure themselves and jobs.
Let not duty, full, complete
Render reason obsolete.

Rather, Thou Almighty Sire,
Let it set the soul on fire,
Grant it vision, strength and power
To o'erlook the immediate hour,
Like the lighthouse on the shore
Let it tower o'er shock and roar,

Flinging warning beams afar
O'er the turmoil vast of war,
Pointing with its steadfast rays
To the port of wiser days;
  Thro' the storm-enveloped night
Let its calm majestic light
Outward through the darkness sweep
Beacon of the human deep,
Warning from the rocks of hate
Nations drifting desolate,
Till the light of hope reborn,
Dawn upon a bloodless morn;
God of the Infinities
Hear our prayer at least for these.

Lord, extend Thy mercy rare
To this Presbyterian prayer,
Where in supplication's guise
Walks instruction deep and wise,
Where diplomacy has dressed,
Requisition as request,
And assumes, the Infinite
May be half cajoled, or quite,
  If the Methodistic mode
Taints it, pardon me, O God;
I abhor their noisy way,
Roaring on the seventh day,
Great Jehovah's mind to fix,
Free to cheat the other six.
  If the apostolic line
Of St. Paul the great divine

Interjects its droning note
I disdain a prayer by rote.
If Catholicism broad,
Think my frankness is a fraud,
'Twas not my intent to blind,
Secrecy has damned mankind.

These, if Thou wilt note and do
As per schedule hereunto,
We, the second party will
In acquittal pledge our skill
To assist each day and hour
To the utmost of our power,
You, your portion having done,
We, like Isaac's thrifty son,
Will, as did the Jewish thief,
Promise service and belief.
Legal balderdash designed
To involve the simple mind.
Slush that hides in solemn bunk,
Loopholes if we want to funk,
And interpreted, can show
Maybe yes, and maybe, no.

Growing weary patient one,
Beaver, I am almost done,
Now, your little head being full,
Naturally I'm growing dull,
And your limbs are tired too—
You have had so much to do.
Little Beaver, heaps of luck,
You have listened long—now DUCK!

THE KANGAROO

Time beholds the kangaroo
Hesitating what to do;
She, the whelp of penal laws,
At compulsion sets her jaws;
Neither coward, fool nor slouch,
Sticks conscription in her pouch.
But—no poltroon—she'll appear
At the finish, never fear.
  She has seen the waifs of time
Banished for some petty crime,
Brooding with an exile's hate,
Savage, fiercely desolate,
Glaring o'er her southern foam
Towards the land that once was Home.
Nursing in rebellious shame
Their loved, hated, island's name.
  She has known and understands
All cold tyranny demands.

She saw prison hulks galore
Dump distraction on her shore,
Branded wrecks of vicious laws,
Bullet head and iron jaws,
Sunken eye and seething mind,
Sneers where murder lurked behind.
Saw the convict cramped with chains
Clank across her scorching plains,

Writhing forth to be forgiven
Hands he could not raise to Heaven;
Saw bestrew the exile's path
Bleaching ribs still strained with wrath;
She, familiar with such scenes,
Understands what Freedom means.

L'AIGLE FRANCAISE

'18 sees the eagle, France,
Leading liberty's advance,
With her bosom streaming gore,
Swooping at the German boar.
Cramping in his writhing hip
Talons that will never slip.

For your nestlings who have died
Let it be your Celtic pride
All the Huns' gestation dark
Never bore a Joan of Arc.
They have grunted about space,
You have given the world La Place;
Your great Captain left a code
Pointing progress on her road.
But the brutal Gothic horde
Plans the worship of the sword,
Tutored to that fatal mood
Rule is vapid without blood.
Kultur delves with vicious tusks
Wrecking roots in search of husks,

Seeing not the tree puts forth
Fruit, long ere it falls to earth,
Still, 'tis Nature's mandate, she
Made him, neckless, short of knee;
Fashioned still to prey and eat
With his snout betwixt his feet.

Eagle, with thy bosom torn,
While your ravished eaglets mourn,
Let it mitigate remorse,
There's a strength that is not force.
Force must ever stand on guard,
Till his mind and limbs grow hard;
Till his eye wears dim with fear,
Till grows deaf his straining ear;
While his serfs, with patient eye,
Watch and wait and multiply.
Force exerts but brief control,
Power is centered in the soul;
You from out the conqueror's slime
Flashed forth to the world sublime;
Proved what history's records tell
France is Freedom's citadel.

Slavery fawns on Lissaur vile,
Freedom marches with de Lisle.

THE BEAR

New Year sees the crippled Bear
Hiking for his Arctic lair,
While he scuttles off to sleep,
Bloodstained cubs a revel keep;
In their novel freedom gay
Fight and funk, caress and slay,
While they bellow freedom's strains,
Sneaking back into their chains;
First to fight for freedom's prize,
First with slaves to fraternize.

Poor old Bruin, bruised and scarred,
You have sure been walloped hard;
Fifteen millions less or more
Is, alas! a gruesome score.
But you fought with bosom bared,
While some friends were unprepared,
While some more were counting coin
You flung millions in the line,
Battling with the mailèd Hun,
Minus rations, blade and gun;
Battling till your weary heart,
Tempted by the traitors' art,
Fell—in ideal fetters bound—
Lost the freedom you had found.

Poor old Bear! When o'er the world
War her bloody flag has furled;
Let us hope your Gothic foes
Will not lead you by the nose.
Let us hope you will not dance,
Fumbling with a Prussian lance;
Muzzled, waltz to furnish fun
For the thug yclept the Hun;
Let us hope your tardy friends
Won't forget to make amends,
But that Victory will share
Freedom with the battered Bear.

THE EAGLE (AMERICAN).

Mark the western eagle scream,
Startled from his lonely dream,
As the world's war tempest breaks,
He, long isolated, wakes.
From his cloud-poised eyrie's verge,
Hears the hoarse height-hidden surge,
Clamor with insistent waves,
"None are free, while some are slaves."

He, while guns tumultuous roar,
Plumes his giant wings once more,
Feels the conflict's surging shock,
Thundering shake his lofty rock;
Stirred beholds destruction's fires
Light the islands of his sires;

Sees the envious spoiler pine
For the soil that nursed his line;
Sees the land where Freedom rose,
Ravished by her ruthless foes.
  Faithful to his race and fame,
Thrilled, his kindling eye aflame;
  Preening, bends his lightning glance,
  Where his foster-mother, France,
  With the Lion of the isles
  Strains to break the serpent's coils;
  Stifling in that poisoned breath,
  Battling valiantly with death.
  To their aid, with mighty sweep,
  Cleaves his way across the deep,
Like the thunderbolt that wreaks
Ruin where its lightning breaks.
  Freedom, as she bleeding clings,
  To the charter of her faith,
Hears the tempest of his wings,
Sweeping slavery from his path;
Thrills—her heart and arm restored,
As Columbia draws her sword.

THE BOAR.

Here you see the German boar,
Mad with murder, rave for more;
Blood alone can serve him now,
Gulps his litter, like his sow;
Prolicide, eats his own brood,
Strangling in his offspring's blood.

Crazed, his murderous eyes aglare,
Gory tusks and gouted hair;
Flanks like bellows strained for breath,
Wrecking Life, to stave off Death.

We'll not kill you, Gothic boar,
You might land in Joseph's store;
For your neck's half inch of rind,
Flavelle's "youths" would have to find
Something that has post-cure beat,
E'er they made you fit to eat.
War time served us many a stew,
But we draw the line at you.
Since you, coward, fear the knife,
Here's a gift: your hideous life.

Vengeance with her curdling heart,
Raking tortures' frenzied mart;
Searching Dante's damned realms
For a curse that overwhelms.
Vengeance crazed o'er countless maimed,
Scorched o'er virtue made ashamed;
Vengeance with her seething brain
Whipp'd to fury by the slain.
Finding not in space or time,
Aught would expiate your crime;
In the tempest of her hate
Shrieks, and leaves yourself, your fate.
"Vets" will make of you a barrow,
Then your sow may loiter farrow:
"Soo, booy," in the sun and mud,
Gorge on offal, flies and blood.

THE FOX.

Here's the keen and furtive Fox,
Commerce, swiping herds and flocks;
War his frugal mind alarms,
Sets him stripping fields and farms,
Storing up a strong reserve,
Cunning eats, let Folly starve.
See him swipe the widow's hoard,
So she may not soil her board;
Boards and cloths are luxuries—she
Has an apron and a knee,
Less facilities to eat,
Work against the waste of meat.
Meat becomes no slave's estate,
Sets them arguing with Fate.
Vegetables are the food,
Thins the wild reformer's blood.

See him sneak with stealthy tread
O'er the live to skin the dead;
See him fiercely patient lie,
Lusting for the live to die;
Watch him thread with cautious paws,
In and out through tangled laws;
Every law, like pliant grass,
Bending wide to let him pass;
Every statute's tangled shade,
Temporary covert made.

Where the truth's loud torrents roar,
There's a ford close by, be sure,
If "the fact" should block his path,
There's a runway underneath;
If 'tis set on Right's firm rock,
He can double round the block.
If, with bold offence grown rank,
He can burrow in the bank,
Sheltered in its vaults can tell,
Like his human type—Snivelle,
Men and gods to go to hell.

If perchance he lands in court,
There's the legal fog's resort;
There the hoking, snoking swine,
Argue anything for coin.
Pile up words on words, begad!
Till plain common sense goes mad.
Involuted and involved,
Phrases solve what's never solved;
Making in their skein, when done,
Fifty knots, untangling one.

Justice drowsing in her chair,
Hearkens with a Mansfield's air;
Hardly deaf, and scarcely blind,
Sees before nor hears behind.
Still not all a wooden block,
She between her snores can talk
And her sense of touch is fine,
Stiffens to the contact coin.

Always to remove the smirch,
There's a last resort, the Church.

In religion's solemn shade
Fox and Wolf can masquerade.
In the sacred House of Prayer
Charity will shield them there.
She—beneficent and good,
Strings the penitential mood;
Talks obedience to the law,
Quotes with reverential awe:
"Vengeance," saith the Lord, "is Mine."
Both the criminals cry, "Fine,
Endless praises, Lord, be Thine."
While the victim, lurking by,
Sinks a curse within a sigh;
Doubts—yet half convinced for once,
Honesty's a brainless Dunce;
Puzzled, from the sacred doors,
Slinks away, to lick his sores.

THE WOLF.

Here behold the legal Wolf,
Bolting victims at a gulph;
Gorged, yet hungry, stuffed yet lean;
False, unscrupulous and mean;
Nature's worst immoral freak,
Coward, savage and a sneak.

When misfortune's winter howls,
Then the wolf predacious prowls;
See his keen, rapacious nose,
Scenting misery in the snows.

Poverty's poor timid hare,
Gasping in a last despair;
Quailing at the murderous yelp,
Trembling, looks in vain for help.

See the pack, with savage cries,
Leap on their defenceless prize,
Ruthless snatch the shrinking prey,
Tear it limb from limb away.
See them rip with savage art,
Up the warm, still quivering heart;
Snarling in their envious feast,
Lest each coward gorge the least.
Their ferocious eyes aglow,
Licking at the blood-stained snow.
Then, their bloody orgy o'er,
Skulk away, to ravage more.
Why do such as these survive?
They're the wisest beasts alive;
They have drawn the legal maps;
They define the legal traps,
They each trapper's name dictate,
They have specified the bait.
Every trapper must declare
When his traps are set and where;
They for every poison known.
Have an antidote their own.

They, like thieves of higher state,
Spring the trap and eat the bait;
Grinning through their knavish meal
At the brainless jaws of steel.

One might listen to the sneak,
Were he not too wise to speak:
If he spoke he might, perhap,
Thus soliloquize the trap;
"He who set you was a fool,
Spawned by custom, bred by rule,
Else he could not think that I,
Suckled on Suspicion's lie,
Nuzzling from a treacherous dam,
Treachery's legacy of sham;
I, whose faith it is—to doubt,
I, whose trust is—spying out,
Would, like honesty's dull heir,
Mope into his clumsy snare.
  There is not beneath the sun
One I have believed, not one;
I in whelphood fought to beat
Rivals from the foreward teat,
Won and gorged in fears and hates
Of my dam, and littered mates;
Suckling yet instinctively
Watched my dam's fierce deadly eye.
  I have seen my savage sire
Glaring in ferocious ire,
Blazing red suspicion's ray,
Where the sucked and sucklings lay.
Death poised in his twitching paws,
Murder in his straining jaws,
Hate and wrath in every limb,
I have never trusted him.
  I have dogged my straying mate,
Scorched with jealous lust and hate,

Saw her swiftly-cautious prowl,
Hot to the far coward's howl;
Seized her, choked her twice-false yelps,
Flung her by, nor knew her whelps.
I, when plundering with the pack,
Loped observant at the back,
Gauging with a wary eye,
Chance to lunge, or time to fly;
When the gluttons, murder-full,
Gnawed till ear and teeth grew dull,
I lay lurking like a spy,
Measuring every limb and eye;
Plotting for the hour when they
Hungered, would each other slay;
Kept my jaws edged like a knife,
For that final clinch for life.

Fawning with the snarling pack,
I had gauged each jaw and neck,
Knew each traitor's weakest part,
And the coward in each heart.

Life to live its race disdains,
I have drank the weaklings' veins;
In ferocious fear have known
Hunger's last resort, her own.

He who built you had a brain
Correlated to your chain;
Boasts of wisdom, yet he thinks
Just in interlocking links.

Each 'original,' yet fast,
To the one before the last.
I such tethered thoughts disdain,
I can cut and come again.
On my unsuspecting prey
I can fawn, then turn and slay.
Coward I, with fear can thrill;
Tyrant I, with joy can kill.
And no mental analogue
Calls me hypocrite or rogue.
Loose, illogical and free,
Man is but a fool to me.
He, by walking upright, lost
Senses that I cherish most.
He, erect in lofty form,
Suffers more the stinging storm.
My four-footed meaner birth
Shelters nearer to the earth.
He with head among the spheres
Heaven's diapason hears.
I, low-listening as I pass,
Hear a shadow tread the grass.
He has reason and remorse,
I have instinct, ruthless force.
He must dress and scorch his food,
I can lap my victim's blood.
He has conscience, grief and laws,
Still 'twixt right and wrong must pause.
I have pity, soul nor sham,
I can kill 'without a qualm.'
He, at evening, kneels in prayer,
I crouch yawning in my lair.

While the fool petition drones
I lie sleeping 'mid the bones."

It would seem the Wolf has "done
Time" at college with the Hun.

THE ASS

Here's our ancient friend, the Ass,
Scant of fodder, cramped with gas;
He, of either bird or beast,
Is of all esteemed the least;
Ethnologically crude,
Dull, ridiculous and rude.
He no keen predacious brute,
Fills his rut, and trails his route,
Fashioned by the hand of God,
As a burden-bearing clod.
Just a creature of the soil
Built eternally to toil,
Wearing, on his ancient face,
His long hopelessness of race.
Ev'n his dignity of years
Cancelled by his ass' ears.

Wealth with laughter-streaming eye
Roaring slaps his lounging thigh,
Tickled at the witless spread
Twixt the size of brain and head,

Kinks to view the humble pose,
Languid ears and solemn nose,
Laughter shaken rolls and cries,
"Judge McNoodle's very eyes,
Look! Oh Lord I'll burst my skin,
For a thousand beans his twin."

Clever Leisure with a smile
Sees that Ned was born to toil,
But not ignorant, she knows
All she to the donkey owes;
Far too wise to laugh or jest,
Of conditions makes the best;
Pities his poor dunce's phiz,
Still, "Heaven made him what he is.
Nature's mandate none may shirk,
Plain stupidity must work."

Evolution's law would seem
For poor Ned a donkey's dream;
In development, a fool
Cannot rise beyond the mule,
  Who, with kicks and blows made wise,
  I' th' first generation dies;
  Something that might indicate
  Mules fling heels at men and fate.
  Born to a blind-folded fool,
  Wise old paradox, the mule.
Wiser than the human brute,
Cuts succession at the root;

Not ambitious to bequeath
Endless heirs to endless death;
Cuts the breed for bad and all,
Students dumb of Stanley Hall.
This, of course, is by the way
"Off-side" hockeyists would say.

O'er a philosophic pipe
Let the mob survey their type.

Stacked astride his long-eared Nibs,
Loads that crush his cracking ribs,
Patiently he stumbles on
From the sunrise back to dawn.
Morn, as flashing she appears,
Floods his listless eyes and ears;
All her glories vast and broad
Shrunk to one long beaten road;
Noontide's fiercely scorching ray
Sees him plod thro' dust-clouds grey,
On his flanks a salted crust
Eyes and nostrils caked with dust;
Sunset sees the panting fool
Paw the green-brown stagnant pool,
Slobbering in a desperate drouth,
With the bit still in his mouth.
Evening, ere she drops her veil,
Views his trudging rump and tail
Blushing in surprised distress
At his semi-celtic dress,
So like prudery shuts her eyes
On the scene her mind supplies;

Wearied in the darkening West
Drowsy day, sinks down to rest;
Cows lie belching by the stream,
Nature stretches out to dream;
Frogs set up their twilight song—
Still the donkey toils along.
Midnight's moon derisive smiles,
Counting his revolving miles;
Dawn, that great grey Dawn of God's,
Still the donkey ceaseless plods,
Loaded down with wealth and grain,
Hunger, weariness and pain,
Nibbling here and there a straw,
As provided by the law.
Silent too, his dunce's bray
Scares his prudent friends away.
He was taught in friendless youth
Ease abhors the raucous truth,
And that sympathy dismayed
Shrinks away when asked for aid.
He is past Redemption's date,
Toil and Silence are his fate.

Wisdom, kindly, gracious sighs,
Tells him to be calm and wise;
Hints that virtue truly great
Never argues with its fate,
But submits in reverent awe
To a wise mysterious law.
Law 'tis damnable to doubt
And besides past finding out—

Which in some far age and sphere
Balances our miseries here,
  Intimates his honored load
Is designed a chastening rod,
Which if bravely borne may prove
Blessed mark of bounteous love;
  Warm with her exalted mood
Wisdom begs him to be good,
Loyal-hearted, patient, grave;
Frugal, strong, obedient, brave,
Says the load which to him clings
Is the lot of earthly things,
And that Death will give the Ass
Leisure, Liberty and Grass.
While his service famed shall serve
His long lineage to nerve,
And perhaps in coming time
Celebrated be in rhyme.
  Smiling then she shifts her pack
To the burden on his back,
And, to prove her generous care,
Adds her blessing and her prayer.
  Modest Neddy's foolish nose,
Moist and humbled, on he goes,
Takes his destiny and road
Reconciled to whip and load.

EARTH'S AUCTION, 1919

Canto I.

Earth about to change her ways
Followed thro' delusion's days,
Pondering in remorseful mood
O'er long centuries of blood;
Balancing the fearful cost
Of the manhood she has lost
'Gainst Hip-Hip-Hurrah and song
Figures there is something wrong.
Old obsession to her clings
Mystifying many things.
In an uninspired hour
She had pledged herself to power,
And thro' centuries murder sprent
Clutched her frightful covenant
In a stern unwavering faith,
Stronger made by wreck and death;
Her belief reduced to this,
Either these—or the abyss.

Coerced and terrified she saw
War the final base of law,
War, demanding endless youth,
For its pyramid of truth,
Heaping victims rank on rank,
As the false foundations sank;
Yet thro' centuries of slain,
Never rose above the plain.

Now in sorrow's faith serene
She surveys destruction's scene
From the Alpine summit hoar
To the silted, sullen shore—
That dread path where glory strode
On her desolating road
From Helvetia to the waves
Ditched and corduroyed with graves—
And concludes that she must find
Metals of less costly kind—
That however dread the new
This, at least, will never do.

Half suspects her monuments
Battleflags with glorious rents
Are a mere heroic sham,
Scarcely worth a tinker's damn,
Are but specious falsehoods spread,
Hiding hecatombs of dead.

Earth, the Spartan Mother sighs,
Wipes her retrospective eyes
And resolves her wrecked domain
Henceforth shall be clean and sane;
Dons her dustcap and in haste
Ties her apron round her waist,
Gazes at the wreck and ruck
Of accumulated muck,
And decides upon the nail
She must have an auction sale.

She, her housewife sense alert
Sniffs the sanctity of dirt,
Custom too that was her staff
Only wakes a tearful laugh,
Yet she droops a mother's head
At the relics of the dead,
Puts some little things away,
Turns her towards another day.

Down from wall and hall and trunk
Tumbling, comes the ancient junk;
Blinds that sheltered many a thief,
Frayed and tattered past belief,
Curtains hiding from the mind,
Craft's stage-carpenters behind,
Solemn frauds and sophistries,
Inches deep with dusty lies;
Pictured saints, with cardboard backs,
Held in place by headless tacks;
Old pretentions and surmise
Burnished in to verities,
Polished by thé patent fakes,
Till the gilding curls in flakes.

Tawdry frames racked with the years,
Peeling off their cheap veneers,
Hanging hallowed nonsense forth,
Warped mentality at birth—
Claiming credence for the lie,
Life and death and sense deny,
Till the twisted mind of youth
Breaks it's contact with the truth.

Calfskinned volumes fiercely wise,
Built on falsehood's warped premise;
Wherein interest "well beloved,"
Proved what vice had wanted proved.
Tomes historic planned to keep
For the shears the timid sheep—
Setting boundaries to the fold,
Mountains rose or rivers rolled.
All beyond was waste and blight,
Filled with ravening beasts of night.
Treatises to show the ass
Faith would furnish him with grass.
Books by parasites designed
To debase and maim the mind;
Legal folios quire on quire,
Each one proving each a liar;
Woof and warp of cunning's hell,
Solving the insoluble.
Floundering through the swamp to bog
And from mist back into fog;
Vast commentaries, deep and broad,
Their "validity from God,"
In blasphemous impudence
Violating heav'n and sense,
Trimmed, to suit the day and date,
And the exigence of state.
Books whose authors void of sense,
Fed by feeding ignorance;
Books to prove the Earth herself
The inheritance, of pelf.

All of which the housewife flung
Out, while wagged her angry tongue.

"Out you go both stick and stone,
Lord, if I had only known,
These imposters are the knaves,
Sent my sons to early graves.
Out, you false and rotten scruff,
You've made miseries enough,
You'll devise no further quarrels,
Out you go, locks, stocks and barrels.
When I've heaped you in a rick,
Time shall auction every stick;
What he fails to sell, I hope,
Will make potash, lye and soap;
And to part redeem the past,
Serve some purpose at the last.
Heav'n now helping me, I'll see
Soon, a New Year's jubilee."

Promptly with the opening year,
Time, decision's auctioneer,
Calmly as becomes a sage:
And the dignity of age,
Baton in his sinewy hand
Mounts on his momentous stand,
Wipes his bald but robust pate,
Then unrolls his Bill of Fate,
Scans it, sticks it in his breast,
Straightens and expands his chest;
Looks around upon the folk,
Clears his voice and cracks a joke:

"Boys, I'll make the world, to-day,
Rich by throwing things away;
And I'll make each buyer—friends—
Wealthier by the cash he spends.
Here's the way to turn the trick,
Bid enough and bid it quick;
I am here to 'Carry on,'
And delay will mean—withdrawn."

"Earth, now wearing widow's weeds,
Finds that she no longer needs
Much that was till recent date,
Deemed essential to her state.
Finding, too, that cares and fears,
Suit not with discretion's years;
Now resigns commercial strife
For a simpler mode of life,
Hoping there to find relief,
For her great and recent grief."

"Earth, in auctioning these stocks,
Gathered by the long, hard knocks,
Wants it understood and told,
Everything that's bid is sold;
Asks her patrons to observe—
Absolutely no reserve.—
Making only one premise
Since the buyer sets the price,
We admit—attention please—
No come-backs nor guarantees.

Close up boys—in my career—
—Been in business many a year—
—Never since the trilobite
Sank in geologic night
Have I sold—'tis safe to say,
Stocks like these I sell to-day;
Kindly note that we concede,
Price means less, than does the speed."

"Here's the first and special lot—
'Persian'—mostly—are they not?
And imported by the Huns,
Supplementing gas and guns.
Obsolete dynastic truck:
Robes and crowns thrown in for luck—
Tinselled trash of blood and fraud,
Flaunting 'by the grace of God,'
Heritage of murder's line,
Sanctified with 'right divine.' "

"These the mantles dyed with gore
Cyrus and Cambyses wore;
And the Scythian Shepherd's quilt,
Limping Tamerlame's old kilt,
And the snowy white tur-ban
Of the Mongol Jenghis Khan;
And a scroll sealed with a blade,
Tricks of tyranny's red trade;
With innumerable cloaks,
Worn by military jokes;
From the fool Assyria nursed;
Down to William Safety-First;

Fops who never risked a scar,
Rags-bones-bottle-men-of-war.
—Sold! I felt I had a hunch,
P. Carranza buys the bunch."

"Here's a puzzle commerce left
—Profit that is not a theft—
Trade's conundrum to it pinned,
'—All enriched and no one skinned—'
Two fine fictions which have cursed
Man since craft evolved them first,
Hiding in their specious murk,
Life's solution, '*equal work*.'
—Anyone who wants to buy—
Nod your head or wink an eye,
Sure, a trifle cracked and soiled,
But they might amuse a child.
Going—going—going—gone—
Sold—to—Willison—Sir John—
If you cannot make it go,
Try an overalls and hoe."

"Here's the script of Jacob's knights,
Fraud's proprietary rights;
Deeds of gift filched from the blind,
And tho' stolen, blest in kind.
While the mob like Isaac sits,
Helpless in its doting wits;
Fond Rebeccas see that Jake
Steals the blessing and the cake.
Here are charters new and old,
Lobbied, engineered and sold;

Charters with the crown's assent,
To exploit a continent.
Charters for a railroad great,
Mightier than it's source the state,
Stolen from the public tank,
While the guardians dined and drank.
  Someone who hates heresies
Ought to boost the price of these—
Force of habit triumphs still—
Sold—Sir—Thomas—and Sir Bill—
—Which will land in Esau's mess,
Maybe Drayton has a guess."

"Here's some statues—doubtful makes
Some by masters—some by fakes,
And to figure which is which
Needs a wizard or a witch.
Whether carved from stick or stone,
Always based on the unknown.
Creeds of every shape and size—
Punk religions—mostly lies,
Warranted—'till now—to bind
In a spellbound awe the mind,
  Worthy these of some remark,
Rolling down through ages dark,
Centuries adding to each creed,
That which priestcraft felt its need
Patched and tinkered by each ass.
'Till—well—here's the shapeless mass.
—Yet it's worth a bid at least,
As a relic of the east,

Showing how Utopians thought
Man might be the thing he ought;
And how crafty interest made
Each a special stock-in-trade,
Were a race to be oppressed,
Off went trade's evangelist
Then the soldiers rank on rank,
Then the bankers and the bank.
Here's what Bill had nerve to add—
God in uniform gone mad—
Right divine—Come—look again,
Means some twenty millions slain—
No one wants the Gothic spawn—
Earth—assumes the loss—withdrawn."

"Here are bonds, a various lot,
In the brain of graft begot,
When finance was flatulent,
Worth a million or a cent,
Worth, despite what sense might say,
Just the price that fools would pay;
Here are stocks of fairy schemes,
Coined from crazed promotion's dreams;
Here a great petroleum well,
Never had of oil the smell;
Thousands more of similar ilk,
Dry except for public milk;
All legitimate because
Each had lawyers—friends—and laws,
Sold—just bid them at the nick,
Beaverbrook—was always quick."

"Here's a rather gruesome touch,
I am bid for it how much?
One pine coffin that contains
Party government's remains;
Stop your nose and take a glance,
You can swear it's not a trance,
By embalming packers canned,
Smells a bit like 'No-man's-land,'
Or like very active glue,
Or like Danforth avenue,
Or like Winnipeg, or Chi—
Or like 'parliaments' called 'dry,'
Or to clap them all in one—
Like the morals of the Hun.
I am bid how much?—Be quick,
'Ere its dearest friends turn sick,
  Tho' its rank and odor rife
  Smells much sweeter than in life.
Going—sold—Well what—the—Hell,
Harris—as a counter-smell."

"Here's 'Vicarious sacrifice,'
Any bid or any price,
Shelter long of gutless slaves,
Refuge of imposture's knaves,
Droning faith's divine resource,
Action's bane and valor's curse—
  Individualism must
  Prove its principles or bust;
From to-day no class or creed,
Loafs while others work and bleed;

Here's the foul infernal fraud,
Yours at any price, by God;
Not a bid—let's hurry through,
Fling his scrap back to the Jew.
What! You bid it—well, speak higher—
Robert Rogers is the buyer."

"Here's another devil's list—
Just the shreds—Hell holds the rest—
Here they are—the relics these
Of unnumbered tragedies;
Relics grim of dreads and fears,
Script of agonies, and tears;
Instruments to torture man
Such as hell could never plan,
Making love, the curdled source,
Whence they drew their damning force,
Cankering in corruption's art
Murder in the festering heart,
Paralyzing arm and brain
In an ever tightening chain;
These are they whose burning streams
Scorched the victim's fevered dreams,
Steeped proud honesty in shame
'Till he shrank to hear his name,
Serf to the debasing lash
Of the bloodless tyrant cash,
Maddened desperation driven,
Cursing the remorseless heaven.
These could change the lily's smell
To the stifling fumes of hell,

Fill the sacred name of home
With the terrors of the tomb.
These could make an infant's laugh
Whip the sire to murderous wrath;
These could make a wife's caress
Fearful as a serpent's hiss.
Here they are—survey them well,
Equalled in nor out of hell;
Means by legal wolves designed
To make prey of humankind;
Means for craft to lie in sloth
While the shackled toiled for both.
Here they are—the apes of fate—
Plunder's love and Solon's hate;
And the Grecian shade once more
Summoned by the cannon's roar,
Stalking with almighty hand,
Lifts oppression from the land.
Here they are—behold them well,
Mortgages the earthly hell—
Now—who bids—to clean the job—
Toilet paper for the mob—
Offered—what?—it's up to you—
Sold to Eddy—Hull, P. Q."

"Next we have a wizard's veil—
One fine censorship for sale—
Most miraculous to scan,
Hides an army or a man;
Can be worn a justice' robe
Or be stretched to fit the globe;

Made an error's camouflage,
Or a curtain for a stage;
Moveless tho' the audience fret
'Till the scene is nicely set.
Used to wonderful extent
By a bashful government
Who in love's sweet union curled,
Hide their transports from the world,
Keeping dark from curious eyes
Love's dear subterfuge and lies;
Anxious each the other's pout
Be not known nor noised about."

"War is made the fool excuse
For its use and its misuse;
Bolts grey wisdom in a cell
And makes Max an oracle;
Cuts discussion to the brain,
Claps a gag on sound McLean,
Hides a head with ostrich care,
Stern still tilted high in air.
Since the head is like the tail,
Well—we too, would draw the veil.
Bid—how much?—I'll not delay,
Any price takes it away;
Heaps of duty for it still—
Lansdowne, Bourassa and *Bill*—
Or—a change from Flossie's fan
For the tired business man—
Buy it—bid it—here you are,
Cherished firstborn of the war,

And godfathered by the banks
In return for brimming tanks.
Bid how much?—a godsend—just
For a Steel or Cotton Trust—
Sold—to Commerce—who has done
Trade behind it with the Hun."

"Here's of Human Chains a heap—
Economics—going—cheap—
Shattered Fictions of Finance
Wrecked upon the fields of France—
Here they are—each bursted link
Rusted—grates a feebler clink
Of the idler's gay refrain
'Brawn—the dunce—must wear a chain.'
Economics—now—who buys
These immense and modern lies,
Wizards who could make the law
For the soil they never saw,
Make the farmer's fields their fief
Tho' they never bound a sheaf;
Kings and captains of finance
In imposture's calm pretense,
Planning in their marble halls
For the dunce in overalls.
Economics—here they are,
Monstrous relics of the war,
Piling profits to the sky
While the endless millions die;
Bloodless jackals of finance,
Death their opportunist's chance.

These are they whom faith the bold
Shrank in horror to behold,
While the future loomed o'ercast
Blacker than the bloody past;
Hiding down destruction's gulf,
Power descending to the wolf,
Which too cowardly to fight,
Trailed his victims through the night."

"Economics sired by craft,
Hydrocephalic from graft,
Whose inverted pyramid
Spread till hope benighted hid,
'Till its sun eclipsing base
Plunged in night the human race;
But the thunderbolt of war
Spoiled its poise and here we are."

"Here's the monster, Protean-formed,
Hydra-topped, Briareus-armed,
Argus-eyed—her gorgon's frown,
Grim Medusa's writhing crown.
Here it is—or, here are they—
Earth has done with them this day;
They from human blight have bloomed,
These monstrosities are doomed.
Going—surely going—gone—
Ah! the monster is withdrawn,
Angry Earth adjusts her 'kerch'
And herself applies the torch."

"Next—well fellows—here they are—
Thousands of them—since the war—
Coronets that decked the rogue,
Dirt cheap, going out of vogue;
Trappings of the would-be great
Keen to quit the stage in state,
Thinking that pretension's forms
Might conciliate the worms;
Fresh from the commercial mart,
Marvels of distinction's art;
Hybridized by hogs and skill
From a protoplasm of swill,
Or like miracles from dust,
By effrontery and—a trust;
Or from labor's sweating hide
Proxied, switched and purified;
Or—from whiskey—dung—or trash—
First converted into cash.
Here they are—Earth's done with these;
Recollect—no guarantees—
Sold—for charitable ends—
Robert Borden—for—his—friends."

End of Canto I.

THE AUSTRALIAN TROOPER IN DAMASCUS.

Where hoar Damascus slumbers on her mead—
  His harness red with the sirocco's rust,
Loose-limbed and sinewy—from his nosing steed,
  Streaked with the battle's and the desert's dust—
    The swart Australian stripped his girth and lines
    And bivouacked amid the purpling vines.

Night starlit drew her languorous mantle's fold,
  Thro' orange groves shimmering soft Abanah streamed,
And while the moon swathed Lebanon in gold,
  Relaxed the southern soldier sleeping dreamed,
    And from the tessellated courts went forth
    The shades of those who shook the ancient earth.

From the rich dust—athwart his vision passed
  In stalwart port arrayed—each martial ghost—
The rythmic cavalry—the trumpet's blast,
  The Captain and co-ordinated host,
    Till, vibrant, rang beneath his sleeping head
    The tiles that echoed Khammurabi's tread.

The Hebrew shepherd, brooding, stood to gaze
  On the wall'd city's heritage of wars;
Its toilsome luxuries' rectangled ways,
  Its midnight incense blotting out the stars;
    Then with his herds and elemental moods,
    Passed to the plains and wind-swept solitudes.

The Poet herdsman whose illustrious rein
Curbed for a moment Israel's restless neck—
Illicit wantons revelling in his train,
Rode weeping southward to prophetic wreck,
Gave his last faithful mistress, Grief, his soul—
His sword became a pen, his shield a scroll.

The eagle-featured Cyrus sternly calm,
Tilted his golden helm in soldier state,
And drained a goblet 'neath the fronded palm,
Then thundered onward with escort Fate;
The khakied dreamer stirring, turned and sighed,
As the swift steeds' far-clanging hoof-beats died.

The Greek Boy-soldier, with the curls of bronze,
Commanding brain, and deep Homeric soul,
Rode smiling past to those elusive dawns
That never lit his unencompassed goal.
Lord of himself—his passions, love and tears,
Dust to his conquering Macedonian spears.

Imperious Pompey, with his glittering load,
Passed like a setting sun, and on his heels,
The bald and glacial-fronted Cæsar rode,
With hungry conquest at his chariot wheels,
Flanked by the bucklered legions that made spoil
From golden Tagus to the lavish Nile.

Crowned like a Bacchus, armoured like a Mars,
Galloped the Roman to his Witch adored,
And fame more during than the darkling stars,
Struck from the plated hoof and ruthless sword;

Fame which devoted hearts shall shield from rust,
When Time has ground the Pyramids to dust.

Lone, bold and self-contained—the Roman arch
O'ershadowed one—who, on his hither road
Flung the Law's ashes—seized the Spirit's torch;
Inspired, exalted, by the voice of God;
And master of his Lord's unfinished art,
Constrained the mind to worship with the heart.

Lo! the fierce desert dreamer from afar,
He who from solitude had filched a faith
That, flaming from the lightning scimitar,
Flashed, swift alternative, belief or death;
Its fires fanatic sweeping far and wide,
Till they sank hissing in the Danube's tide.

From noon-dark woods, chalk wastes and sea-bleak dunes
Flowed the fierce zealots of the frigid strands,
Their northern ice smote by the Syrian suns,
Melting like rain into the desert sands;
Waste of that TRADE who drives her hosts to war,
With battle cries of "Cross" or "Sepulchre."

The Mongol dread his yellow whirlwind rode,
The milestones of his flight funereal pyres—
Kingdoms and races swept away in blood,
Oblivion brooding o'er extinguished fires,
Till desolation maddened answering calls
The famished wolves that prowl the city walls.

* * * * *

Réveillé echoing o'er the river banks,
Smote with the sun the mosque and minaret;
The neighing horse vibrated gaunted flanks,
While rose the smoke from odorous kitchenette;
Donning his spurs and bandolier with speed,
The trooper saddled his still grinding steed.

Testing the girth—indulged a waking dream—
"Beyond Aleppo and Stamboul, old scout!
Our rendezvous lies on a wendish stream,
Where we and much that was shall muster out,
And then—earth sobered of her red excess—
The southern cross, the loitering sheep, and—Tess."

AT THE BOURNE.

The fate that I inherit,
Has flung me far afield;
Born with the old world spirit,
I to the new was sealed;
Drank from its sparkling fountains
With thirst beyond their art,
And gazed on snow-capped mountains
With green hills in my heart.
But now I'm set for Salem
To lay an exile's head,
The still and quiet Salem,
The old and grassy Salem,
The Salem of my schoolmates,
Where sleep the rustic dead.

Of cities and contentions
My soul is sick and sore,
Of trade's false, sleek conventions
I want no ha'p'orth more;
Me to lie by the meadows,
Where cattle drowse and graze,
And the deep maple shadows,
The sheep in summer days.
Beside thine old yard, Salem,
Where life's unharnessed lie,
In your green bosom, Salem,
The sunlight-flooded Salem,
The Salem that looks westward,
Towards the evening sky.

In youth all proud and virile,
Girt for ambition's strife,
Your mouldering mounds looked sterile
To me, surcharged with life;
And when the fears that clothe you
O'er my young schoolmates lay,
I thought my soul would loathe you
For ever and a day.
That hate has left me, Salem,
Oh, refuge, all supreme,
I'm turning to you, Salem,
I'm halting to you, Salem,
Oh, Salem, safe and silent,
Where I can sleep and dream.

Your leaning moss-grown marbles,
Your tawdry granite pride;

Your rhyming bosh that garbles,
The grief it cannot hide.
Poor vanities still jesting,
I pity and let pass,
For summer still sees nesting
The graybird in the grass.
She haunts your hillside, Salem,
In nature's faith serene;
She stirs the dawn, O Salem,
She flits at twilight, Salem,
To brood above her nestlings,
As death had never been.

Thus for world-wearied bosoms
Your realm exhales a charm,
Languid as apple-blossoms
That scent the quiet farm;
Faith hopes your mystic furrow
May from its crumbling clod,
Unfold on some far morrow,
The Virtue that is God.
Whate'er befall, O Salem—
As one of falsehood's foes,
Give me—heart-tired—Salem,
Give me—soul-wearied—Salem,
A Wanderer—soiled with travel,
Your sancturied repose.

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